Deux
Red Blinds the Foolish
est em
EXPLICIT CONTENT

# Savage Passion

Rafita is the young, rising star of the bullfighting world known as "The Red Matador." He has never feared facing a bull since his first kill at the age of twelve. But when he falls in love with Mauro, a butcher who rends the bulls that Rafita kills, his confidence begins to waver. In the matador's dreams, Mauro (who, like a bull, is color-blind) is, alternately, the bull he faces in the ring and the butcher who carves up his own skewered corpse. Beautifully observed and drawn by est em, the author of *Seduce Me After the Show*, with a depth of style and passion, *Red Blinds the Foolish* depicts a complex relationship, and a cultural form, in a place where the sublime and the savage meet.

*All of est em's work has an unmistakable grace, elegance, and depth. Her characters—be they dancers, butchers, fading punk stars, or bullfighters—are kind-hearted, yet sometimes cruel; ambitious, yet insecure; intelligent, yet often foolish. And they are all drop-dead gorgeous. Though I may be biased, I believe est em is to Boys' Love what Ursula K. LeGuin is to Science Fiction and Fantasy. She is not a good Boys' Love artist. She is a gifted storyteller who happens to tell stories about men in love.*
*—Matt Thorn*

Deux
Where Fantasy Becomes Obsession...
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## Red Blinds the Foolish
### episode 1

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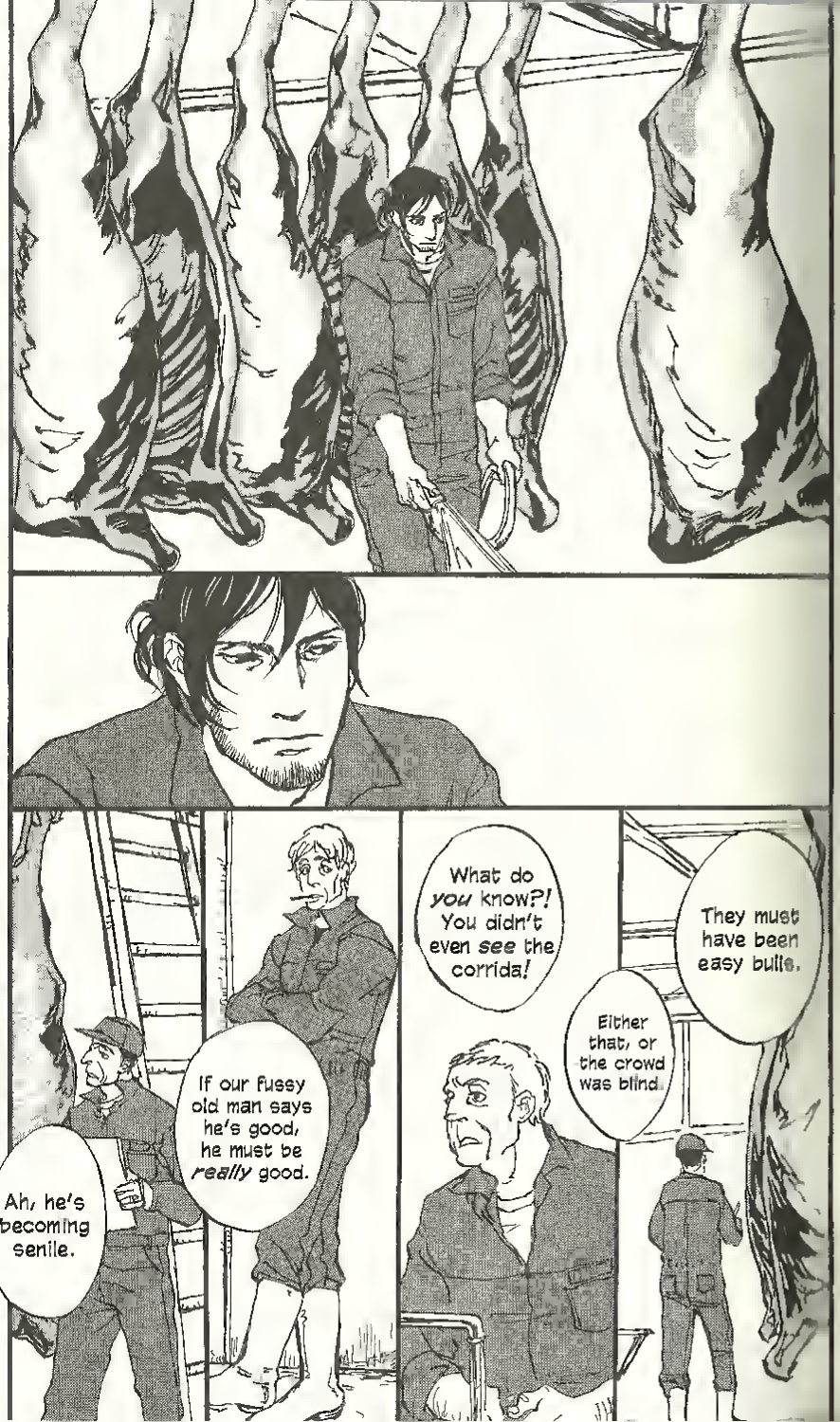
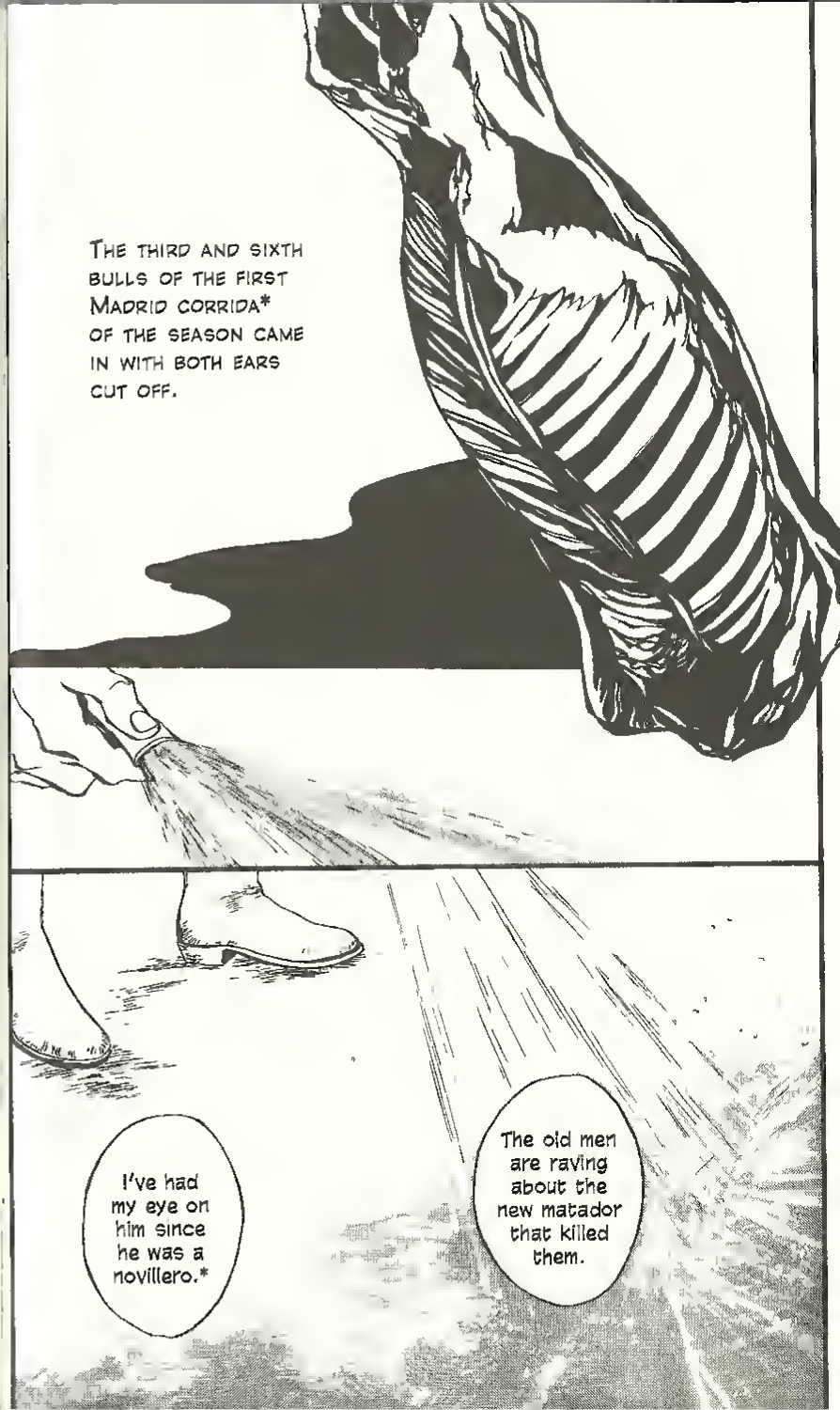
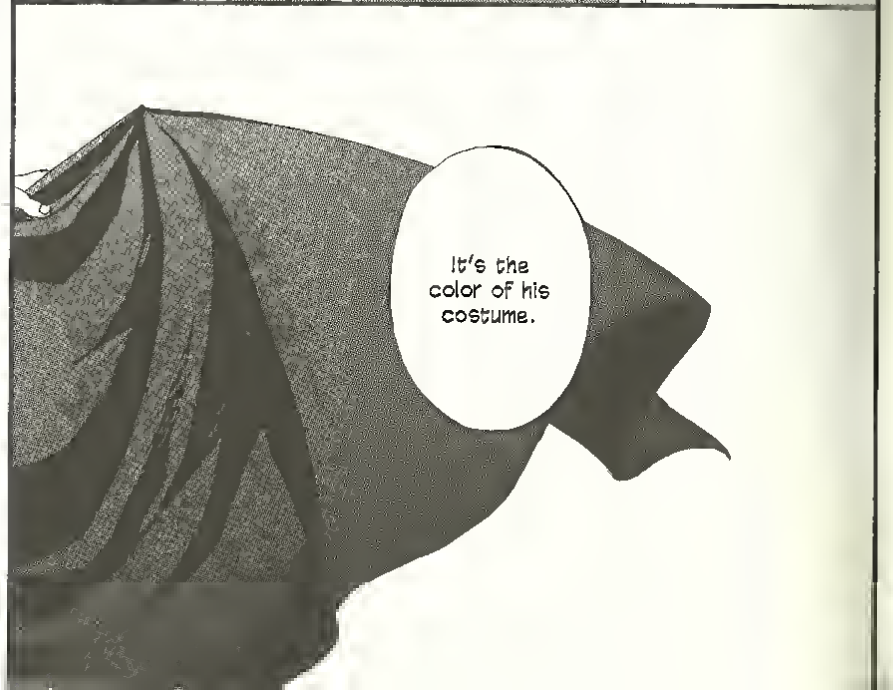
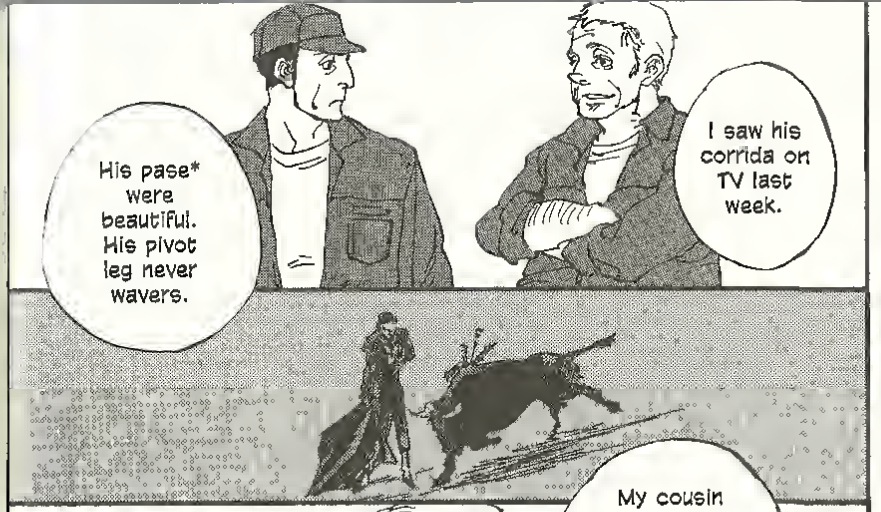

Ah, he's becoming senile.
If our fussy old man says he's good, he must be *really* good.
What do *you* know?! You didn't even *see* the corrida!
Either that, or the crowd was blind.
They must have been easy bulls.


THE THIRD AND SIXTH BULLS OF THE FIRST MADRID CORRIDA* OF THE SEASON CAME IN WITH BOTH EARS CUT OFF.
I've had my eye on him since he was a novillero.*
The old men are raving about the new matador that killed them.

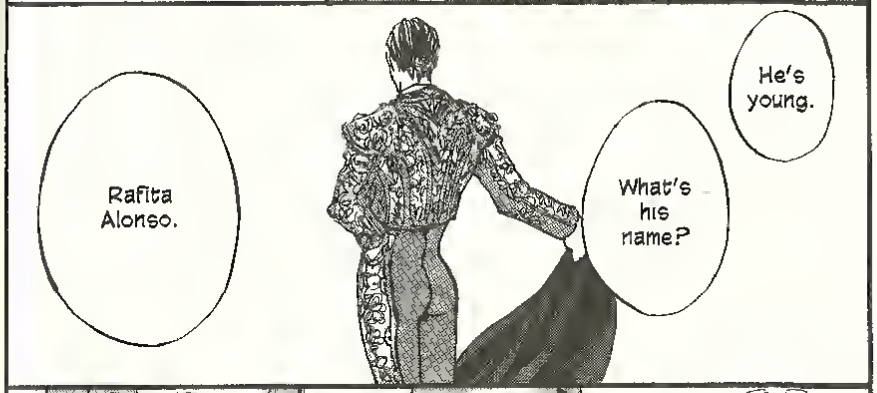
Why "Red"?

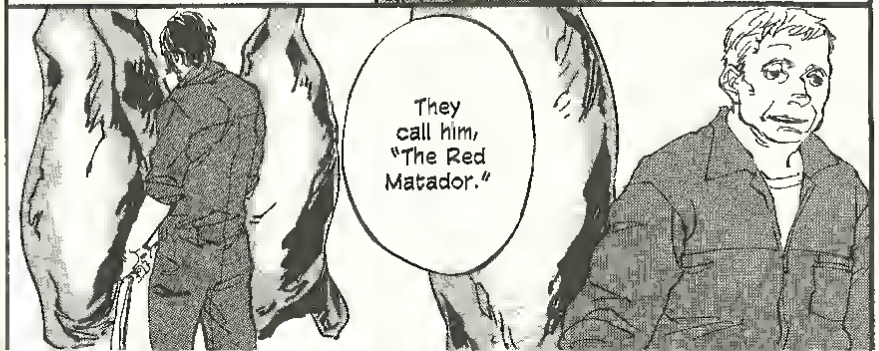
Mauro.
You haven't seen him yet?

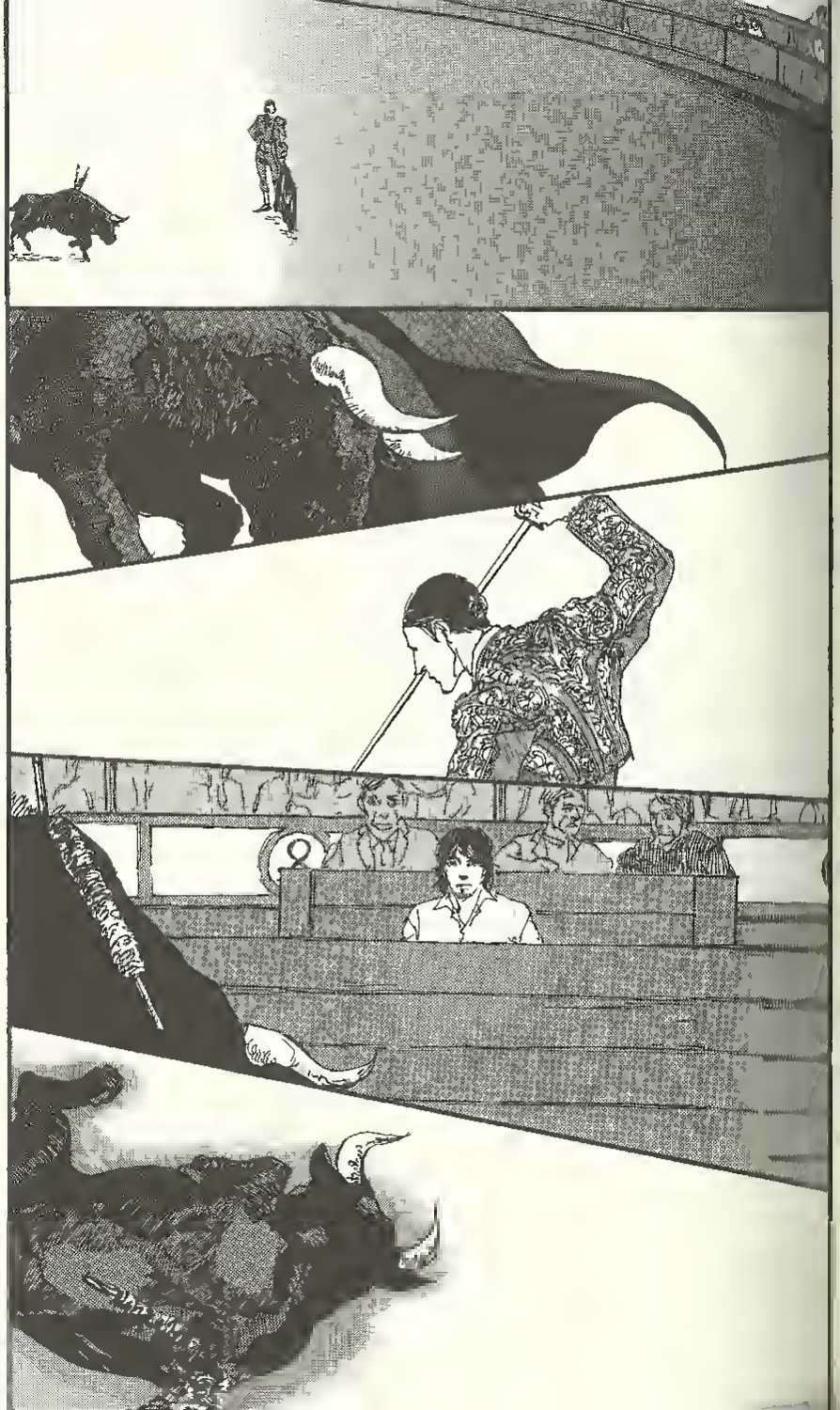

It's the color of his costume.


His pase* were beautiful. His pivot leg never wavers.
I saw his corrida on TV last week.

Quite a fan.
My cousin says he drives all over, from Barcelona to Sevilla, to see his corridas.


Rafita Alonso.
What's his name?
He's young.


They call him, "The Red Matador."



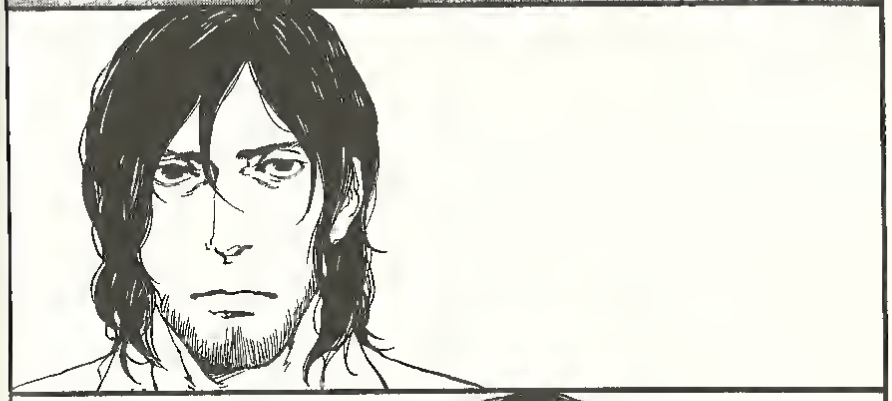
CASA DEL GUAPO

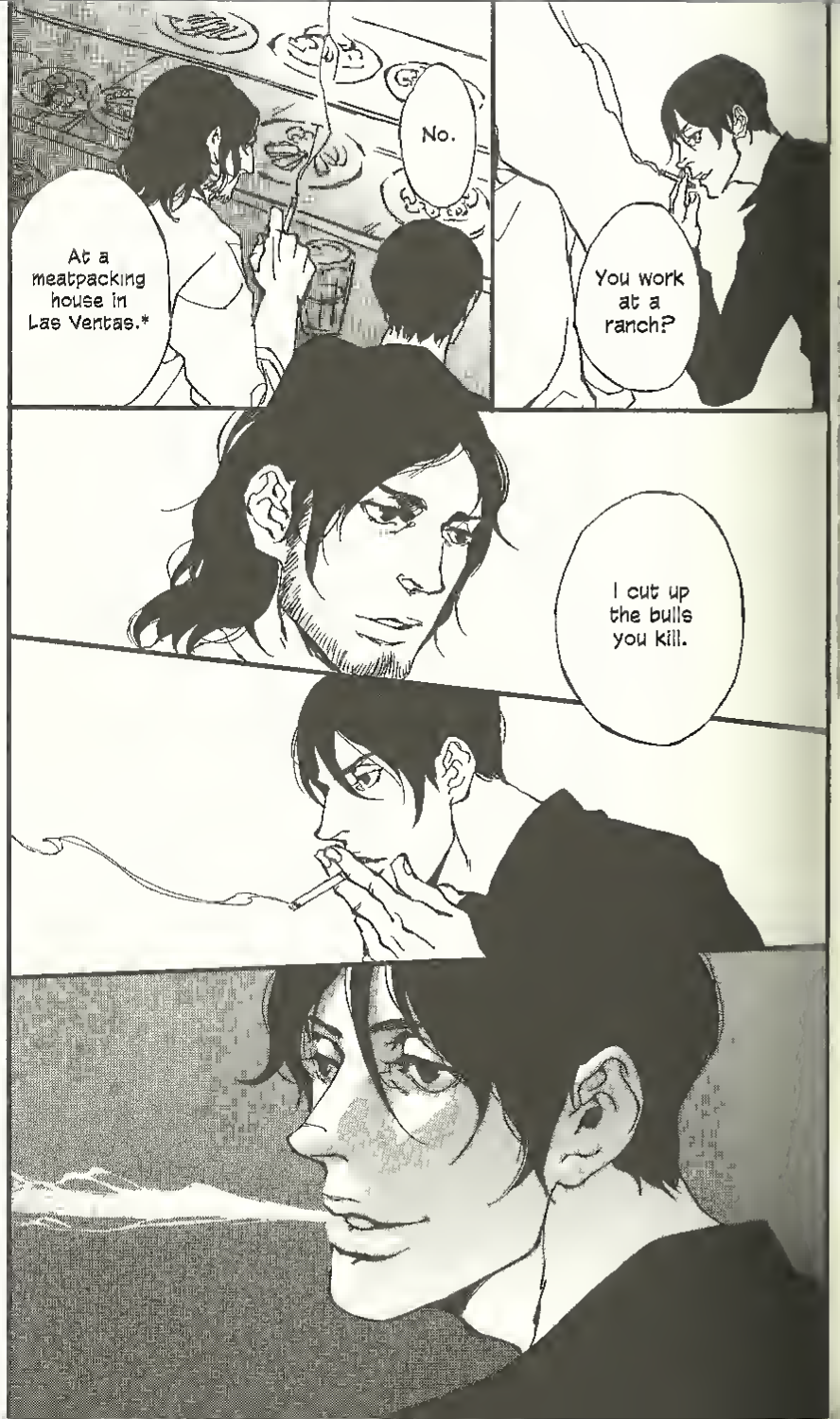
Just as I said, no?
He's good. His legs don't waver.
Well, I saw him.
It's about time.

No doubt.
And he's handsome, too. The ladies will be all over him.

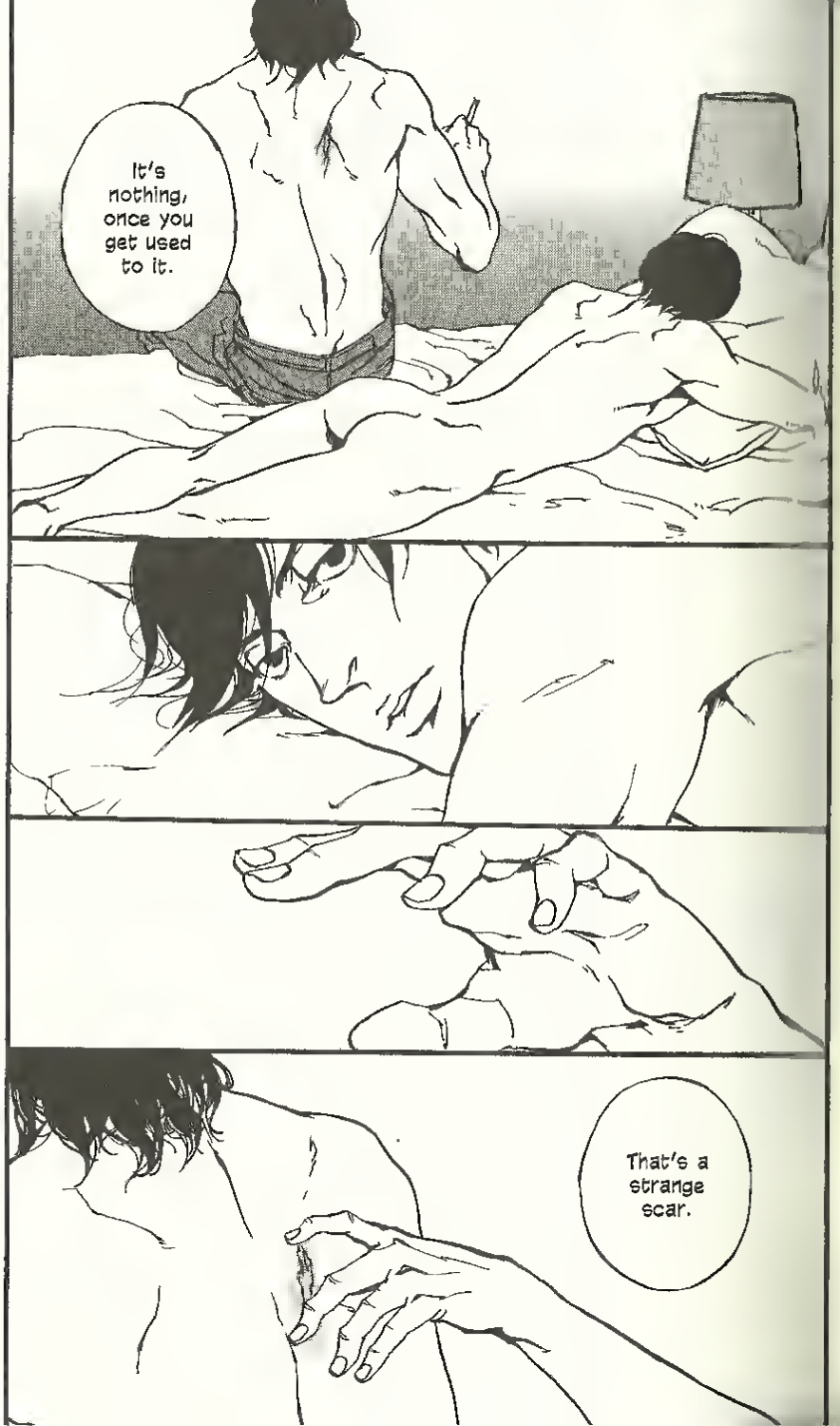
Ha ha ha.
Even my wife is crazy about him. At her age...

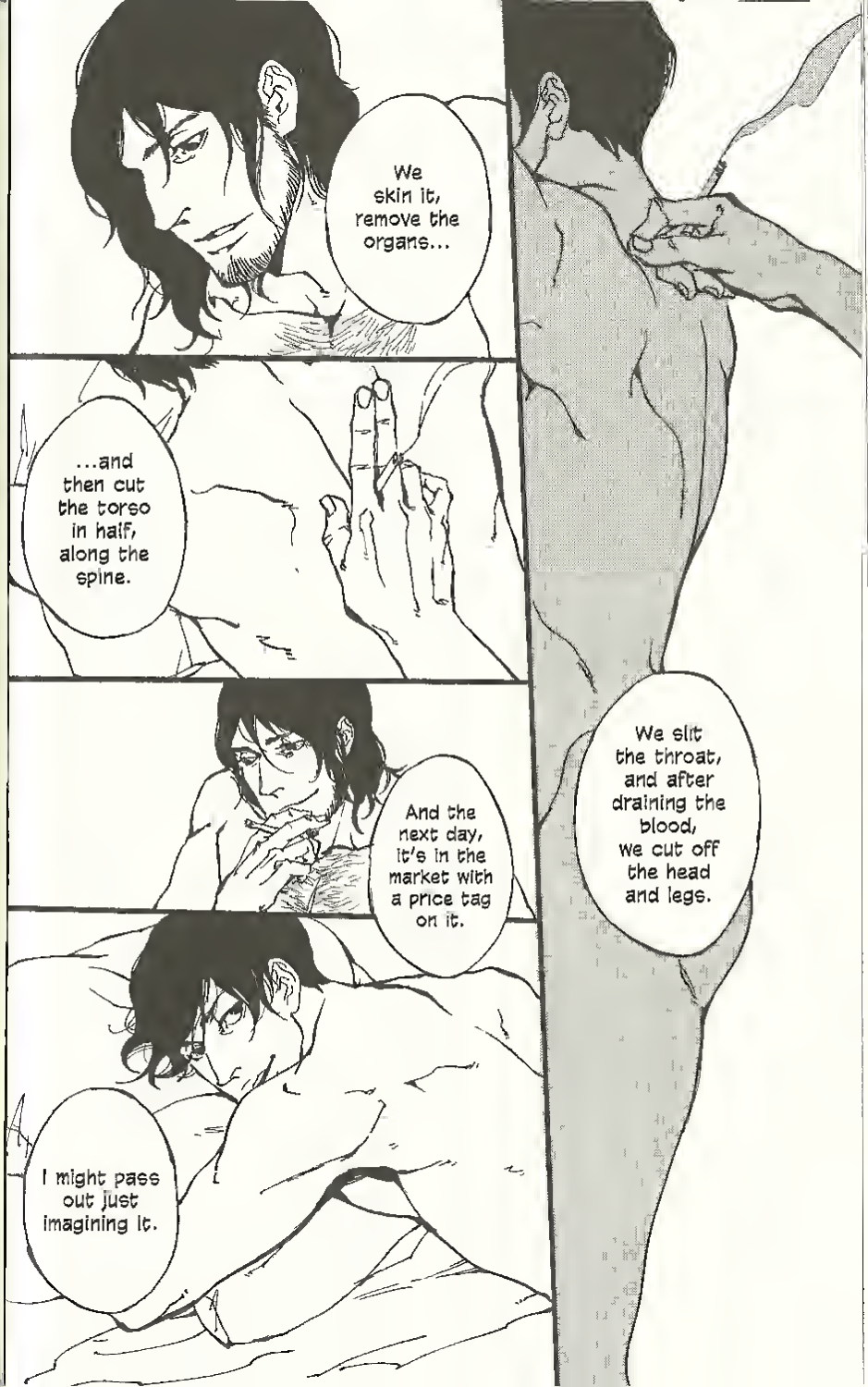
Don't let him steal her away.

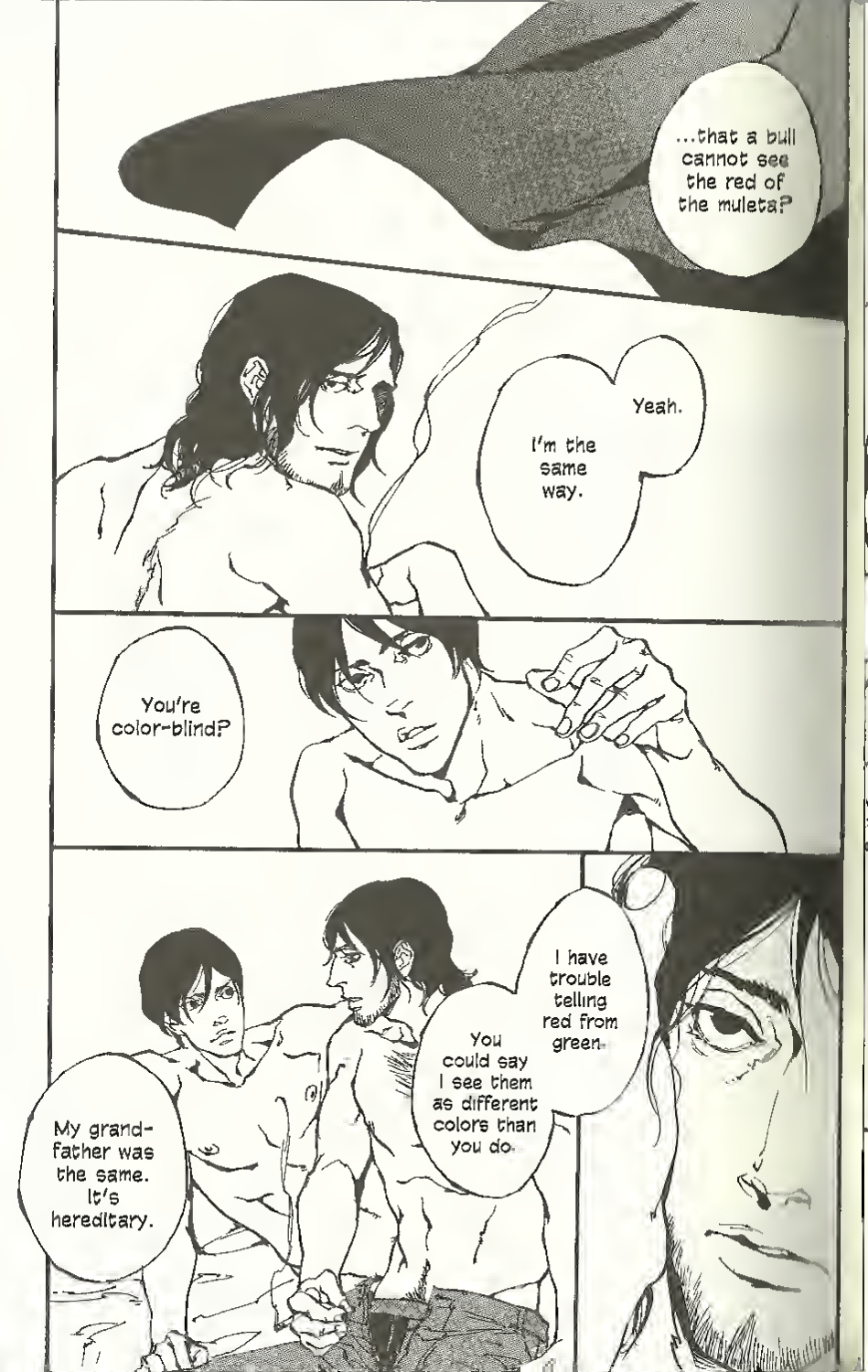



No.
At a meatpacking house in Las Ventas.*
You work at a ranch?
I cut up the bulls you kill.

Can I have a light?
You were at the bullring today.
Watching from the fence.


It's nothing, once you get used to it.
That's a strange scar.

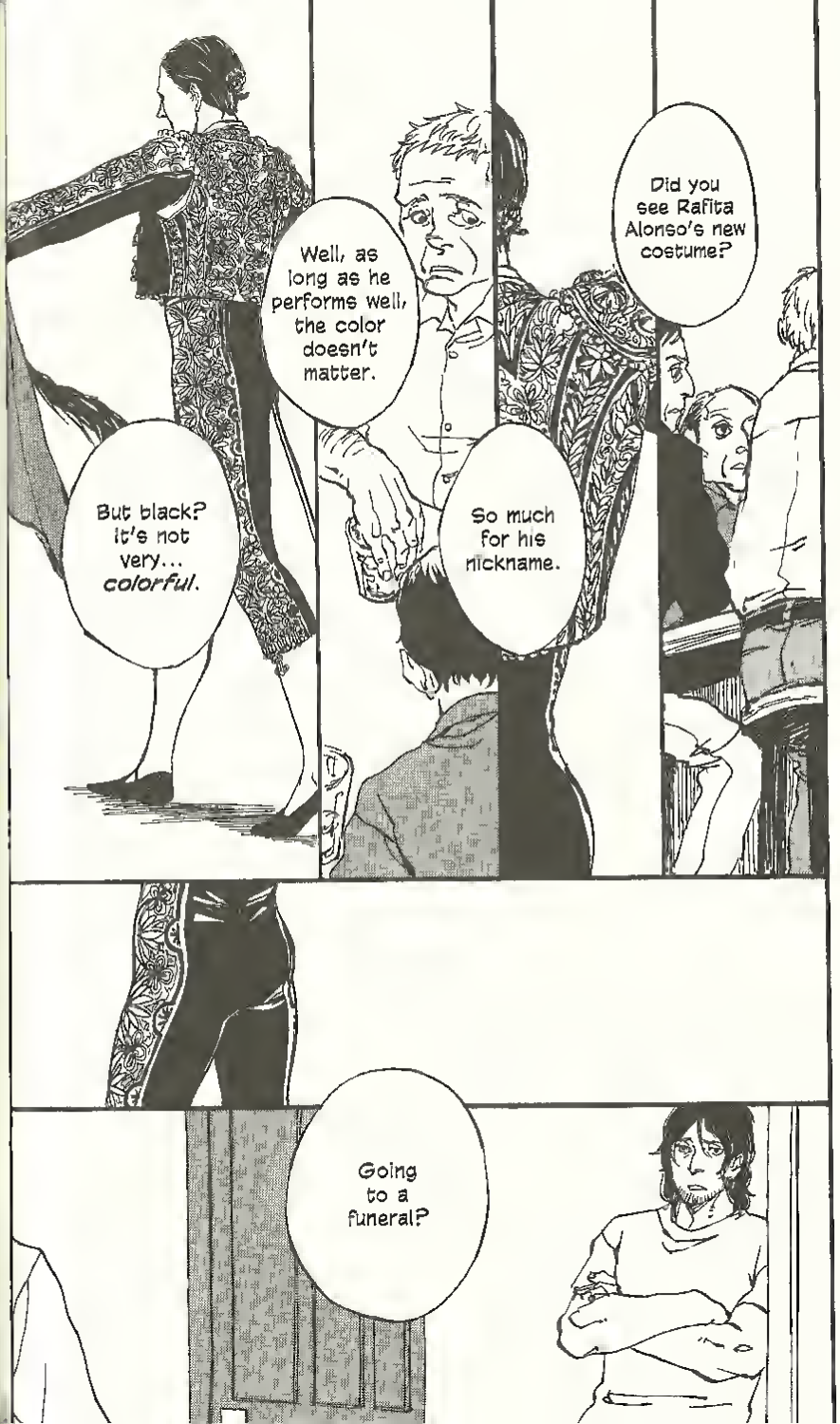

We skin it, remove the organs...
...and then cut the torso in half, along the spine.
We slit the throat, and after draining the blood, we cut off the head and legs.
And the next day, it's in the market with a price tag on it.
I might pass out just imagining it.

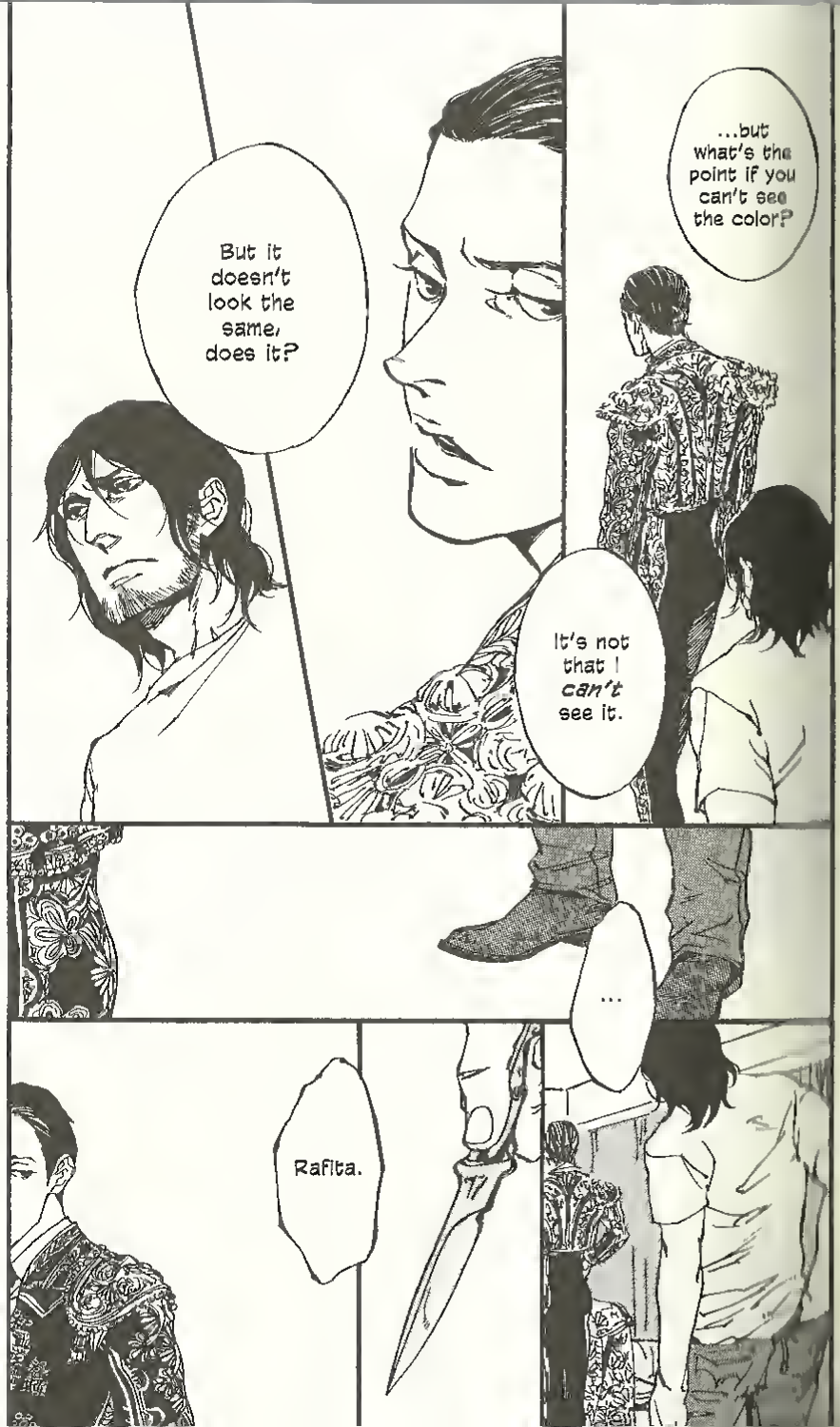

...that a bull cannot see the red of the muleta?
Yeah. I'm the same way.
You're color-blind?
I have trouble telling red from green.
You could say I see them as different colors than you do.
My grandfather was the same. It's hereditary.

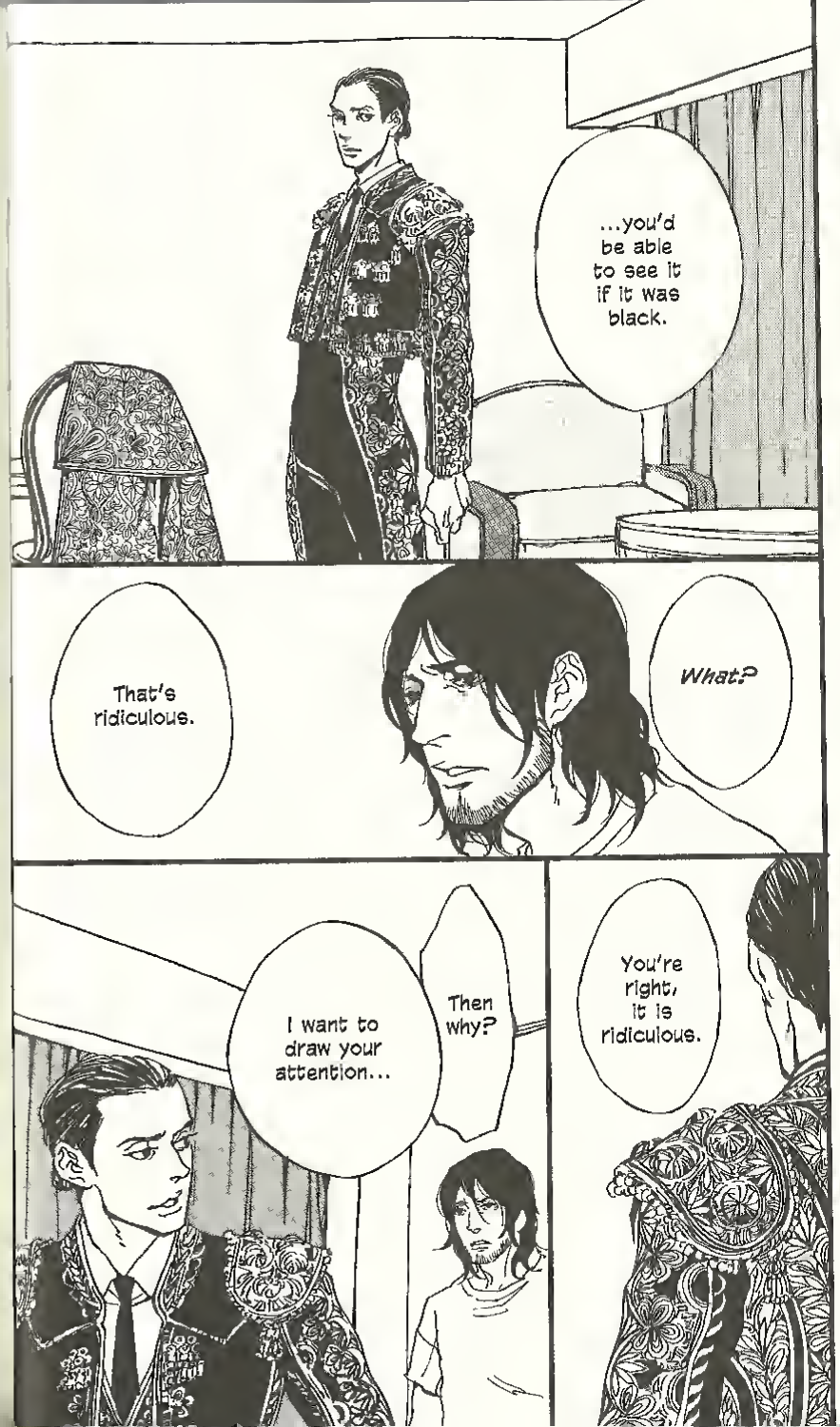
With that as a target, you would make an easy opponent.
On a bull, this is where one aims to deliver the death blow in a corrida.
I fell against an iron fence during a fight, years ago.
We had a souvenir muleta* in our house, and when I was a kid we played at the corrida.
My grandfather would probably have said the same thing. He was crazy about the corridas.
Grandpa always played the matador. Pretty childish of him, come to think of it.
Did you know, Mauro...

What, did somebody die?
Because I am a matador.
You're like a bull.
A scarred back and color-blind.
Oh, yes. There is no more beautiful creature than a bull.
Then why do you kill them?
Is that a *compliment*?

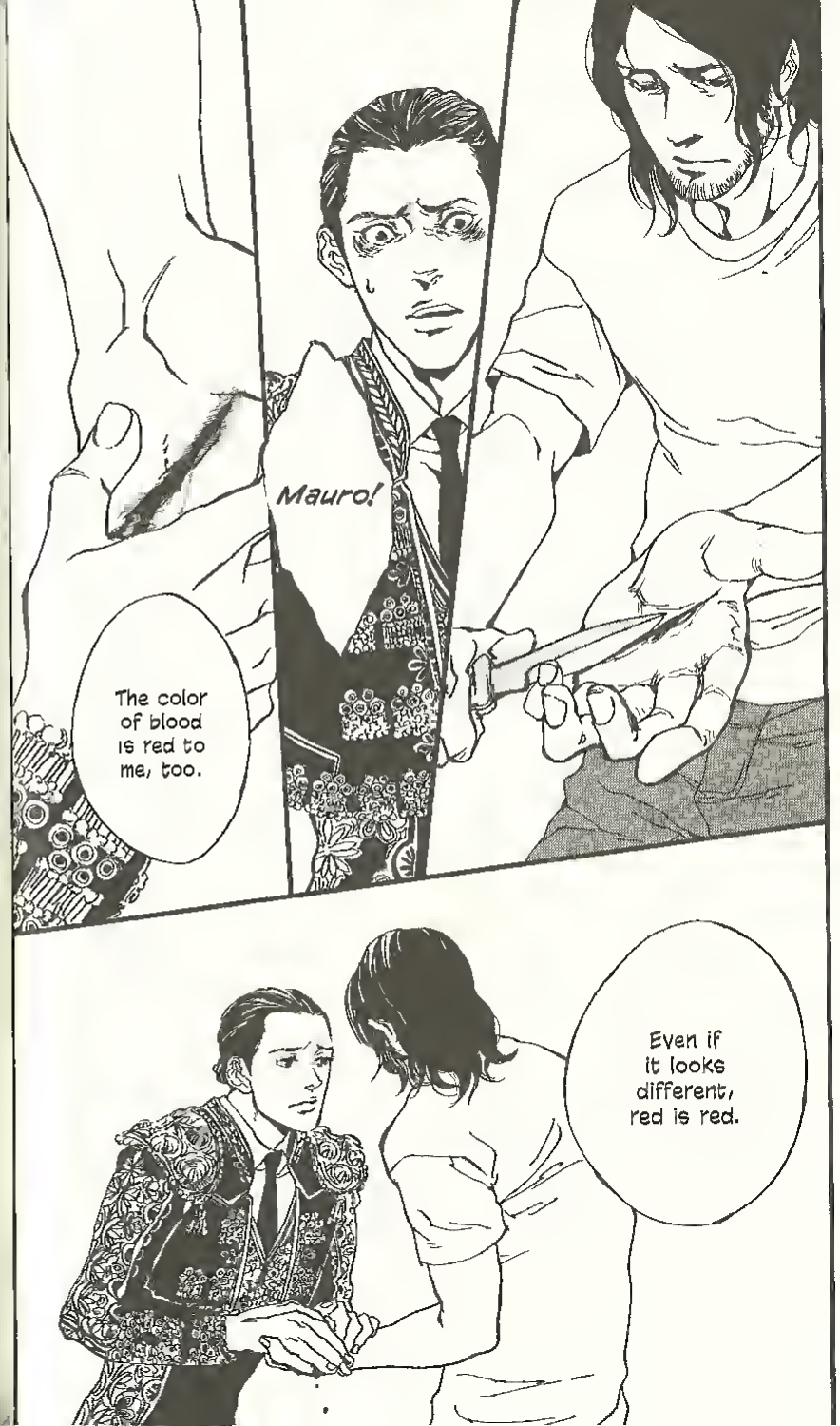
Not you, too.
Why?
Why did you change your color?
Diego, could you leave us alone for a moment?
Just for a change of pace.
I thought...


Did you see Rafita Alonso's new costume?
Well, as long as he performs well, the color doesn't matter.
But black? It's not very... *colorful*.
So much for his nickname.
Going to a funeral?

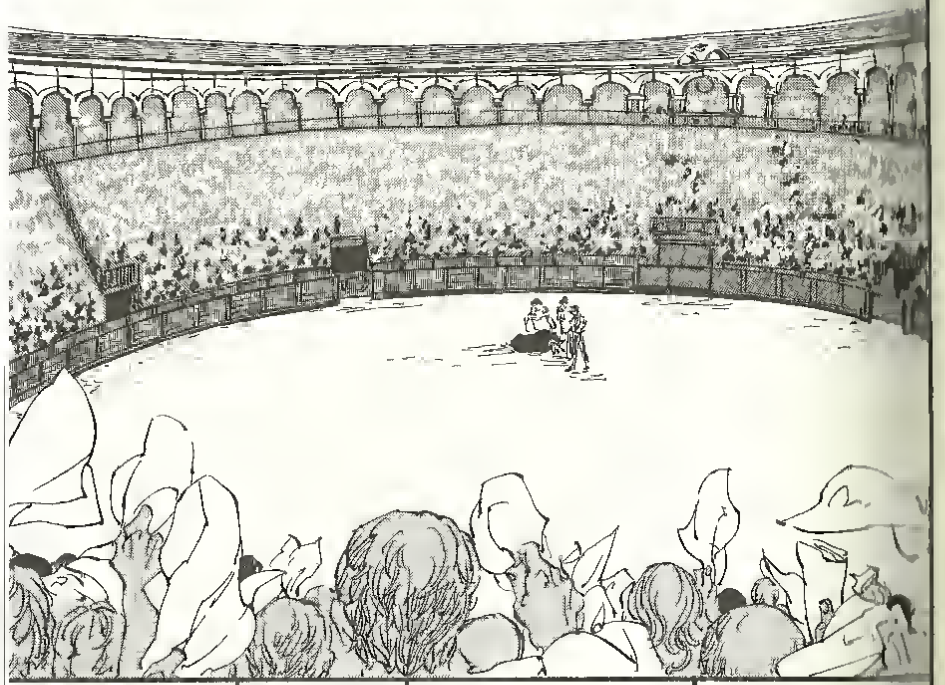

But it doesn't look the same, does it?
...but what's the point if you can't see the color?
It's not that I *can't* see it.
...
Rafita.


...you'd be able to see it if it was black.
That's ridiculous.
*What?*
I want to draw your attention...
Then why?
You're right, it is ridiculous.

The first time I saw you in Las Ventas in May...
...was the first time I ever thought red was a beautiful color.
Yes.
That day in May...


Mauro!
The color of blood is red to me, too.
Even if it looks different, red is red.

*Red Blinds the Foolish*
*episode 2*



...WHO WAS DRAWN TO THAT FLUTTERING RED.

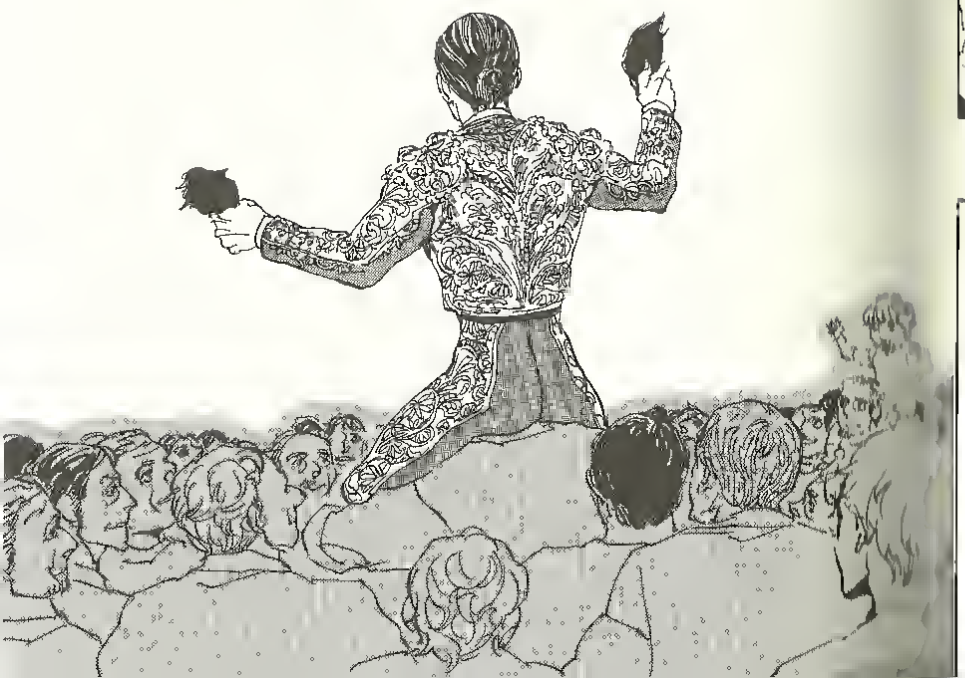
...IT WASN'T JUST THE BULL...

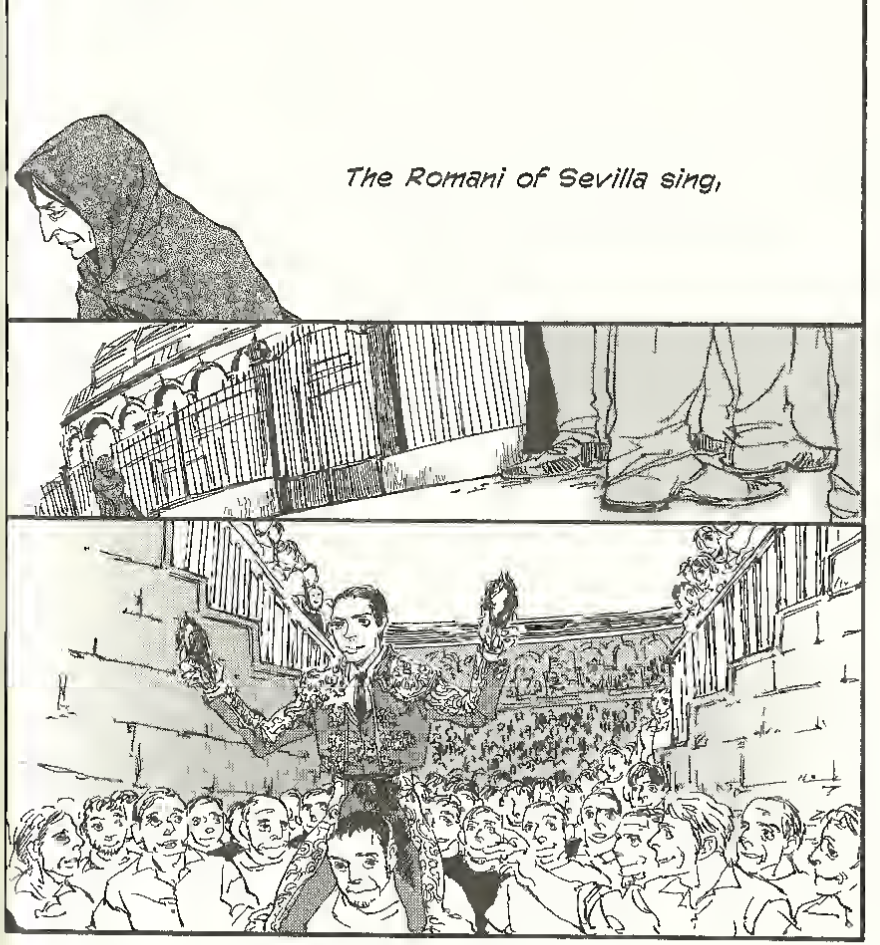
...for someday
you shall die...

...on the horns of
the bull."

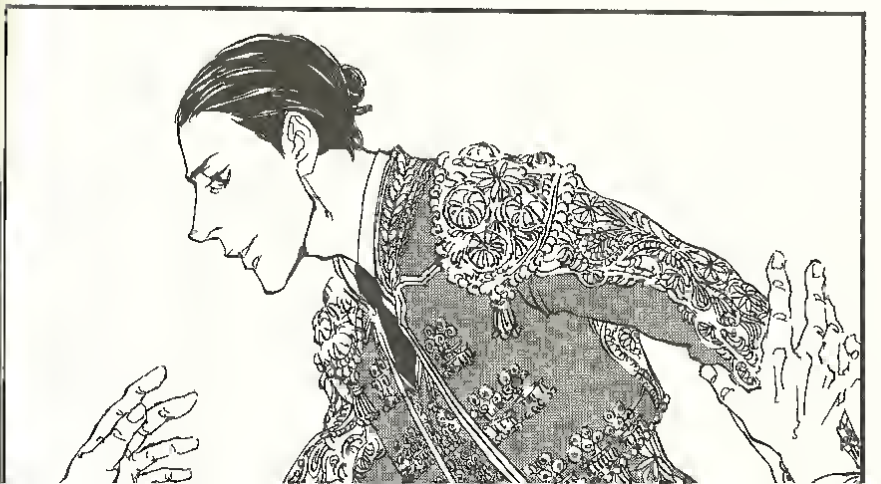
# Red Blinds the Foolish

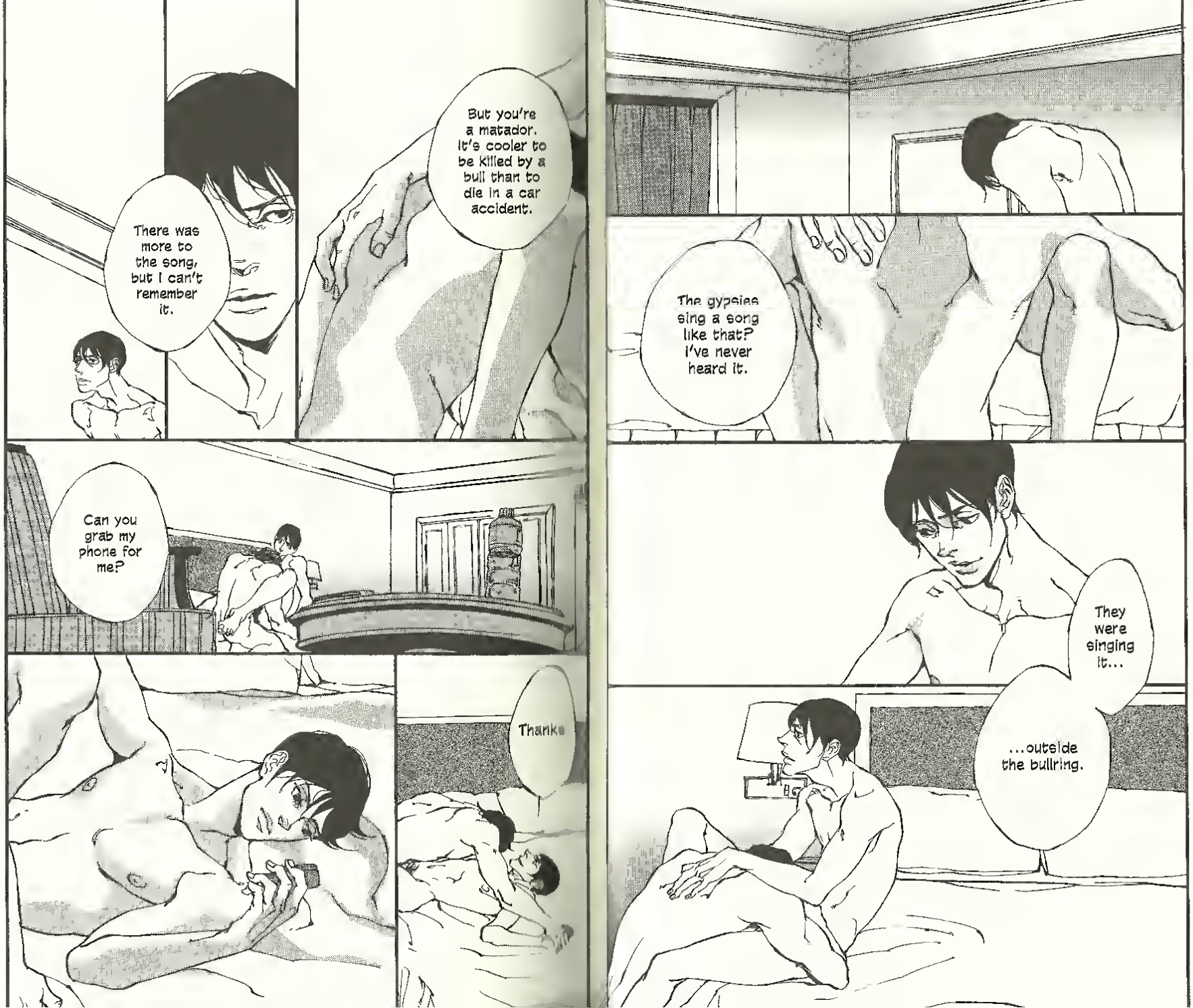
episode 2

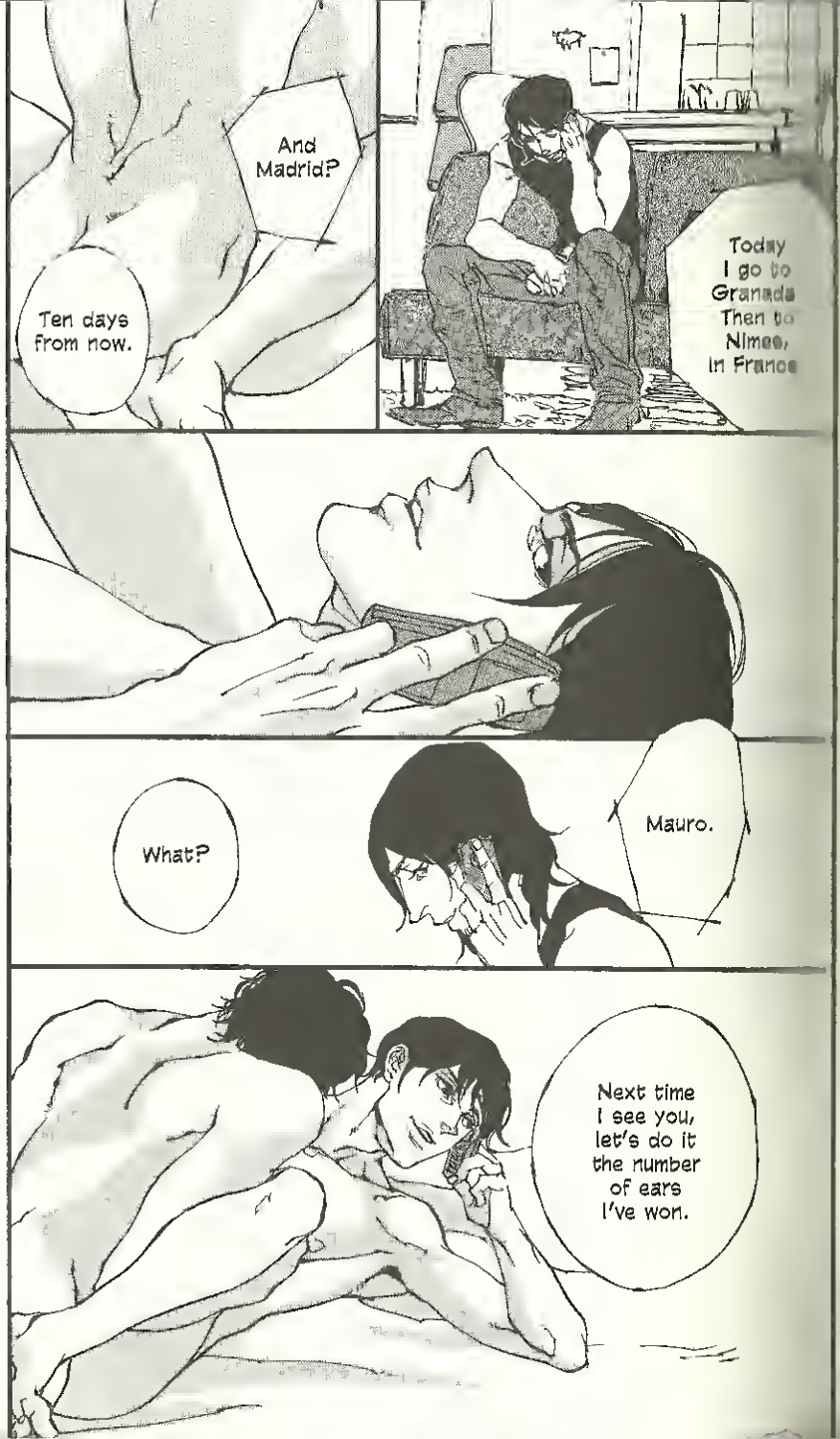





"Take care, matador...




There was more to the song, but I can't remember it.
But you're a matador. It's cooler to be killed by a bull than to die in a car accident.
Can you grab my phone for me?
Thanks
The gypsies sing a song like that? I've never heard it.
They were singing it...
...outside the bullring.

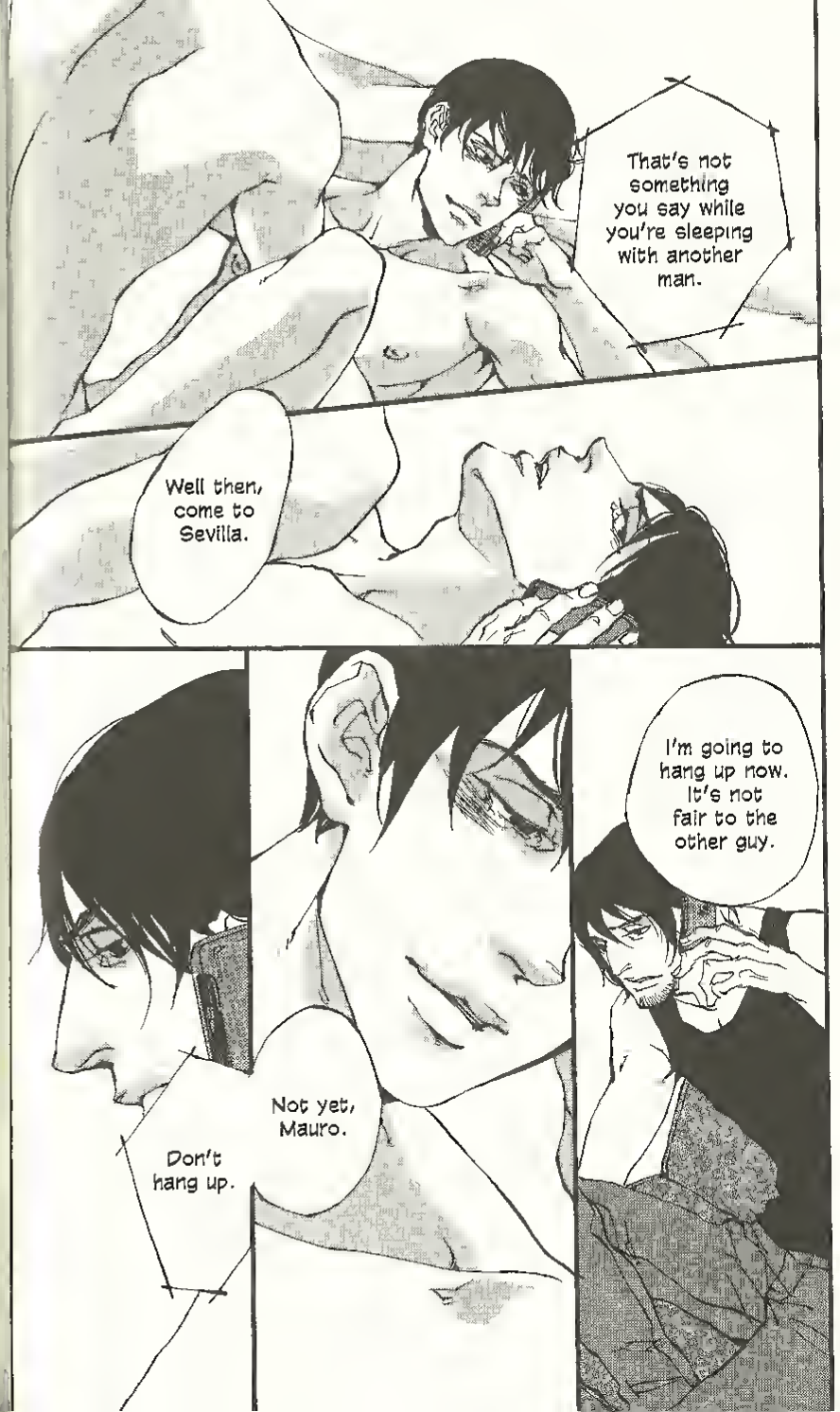

Ten days from now.
And Madrid?
Today I go to Granada Then to Nimes, in France
Mauro.
What?
Next time I see you, let's do it the number of ears I've won.

Mauro?
You got another pair of ears today.
Congrat-ulations.
We got rained out.
What's your schedule?
How was Madrid today?
It was a good bull.

Ah!
Mauro.
I miss you.
Mauro.
I love you.

I'll have to work out an installment plan.
It'll be more when we see each other.
How many have you got so far?
Nine.
Twelve, counting today's.
I miss you.
I really miss you.
Mm...

Don't hang up.
Uhh!
Ah!
Mauro...
MAURO!
BIP

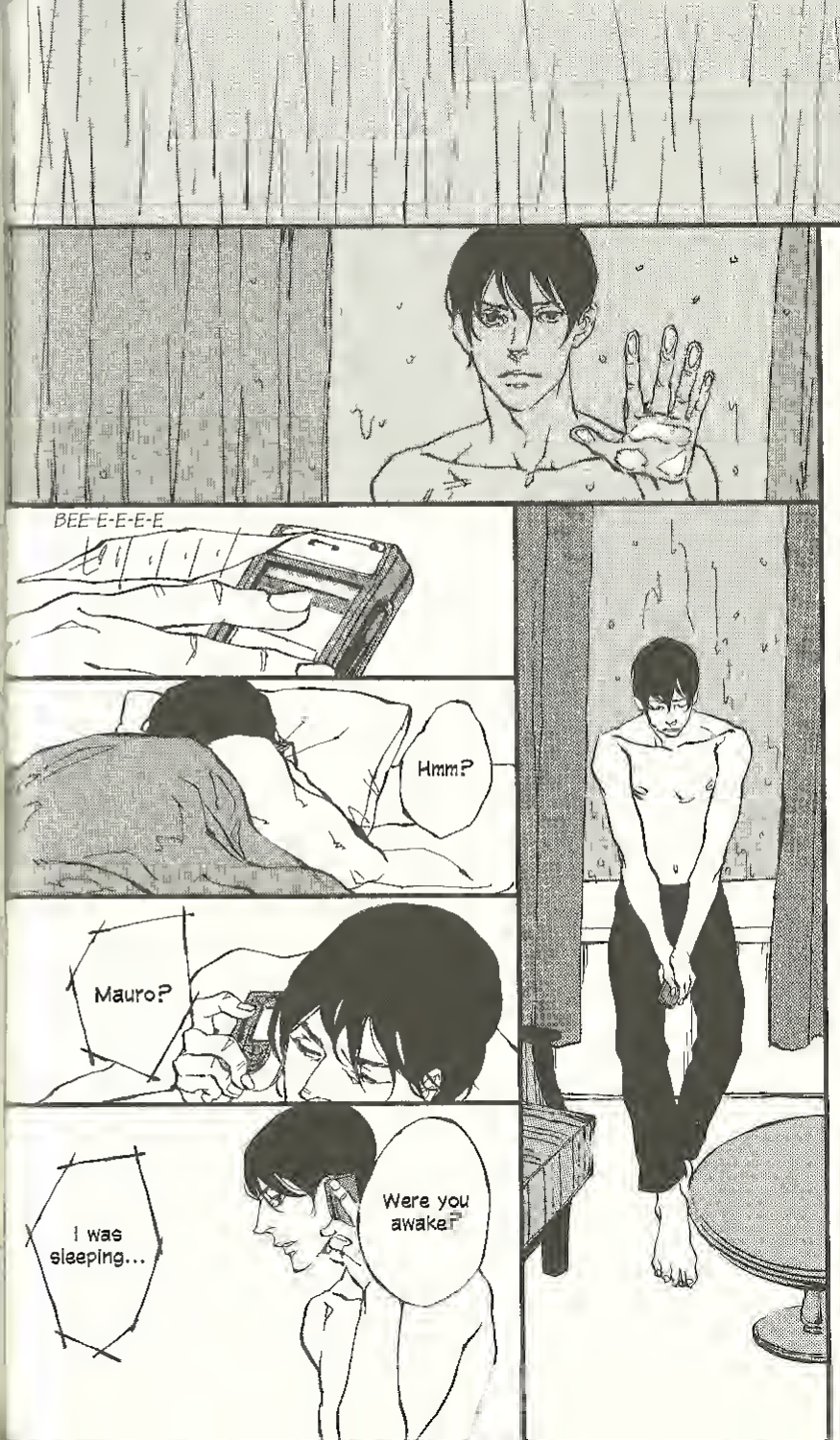

That's not something you say while you're sleeping with another man.
Well then, come to Sevilla.
I'm going to hang up now. It's not fair to the other guy.
Not yet, Mauro.
Don't hang up.

It's just that... in my case, I really have no fear.
"...someday you shall die on the horns of the bull.
Be afraid, matador. For if you are not..."

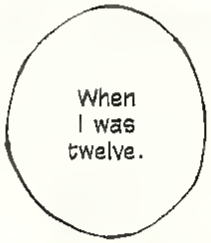
BE AFRAID?
OF WHAT?

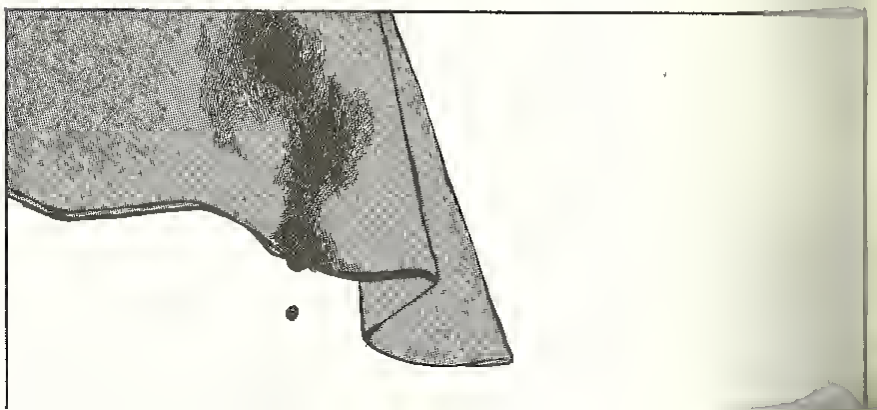
No, I feel no fear when I stand in front of a bull.
So does your resolve account for the fact that you have never been scarred by the horn of a bull?
Every matador has that same resolve.

There's no one here now.
Thunder, too. Talk to me.
What's wrong with the guy sleeping next to you?
Can you hear the rain? It's pouring here.
I don't even remember what I said.
I recorded it and just got around to watching it.
You said you're not afraid to stand in front of a bull.
The interview.
The corrida?
I saw you on TV.
Oh, that.


BEE-E-E-E-E
Hmm?
Mauro?
I was sleeping...
Were you awake?

From the first day I ever killed a bull.
When was that?

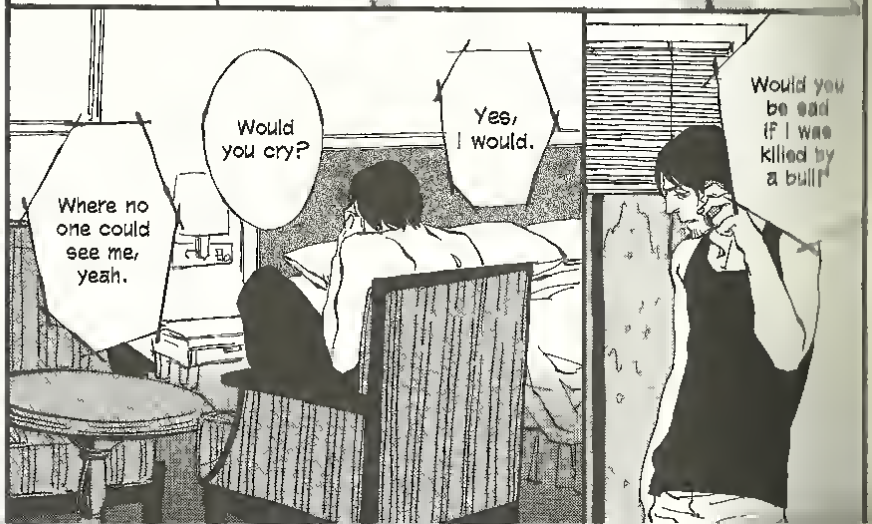

When I was twelve.

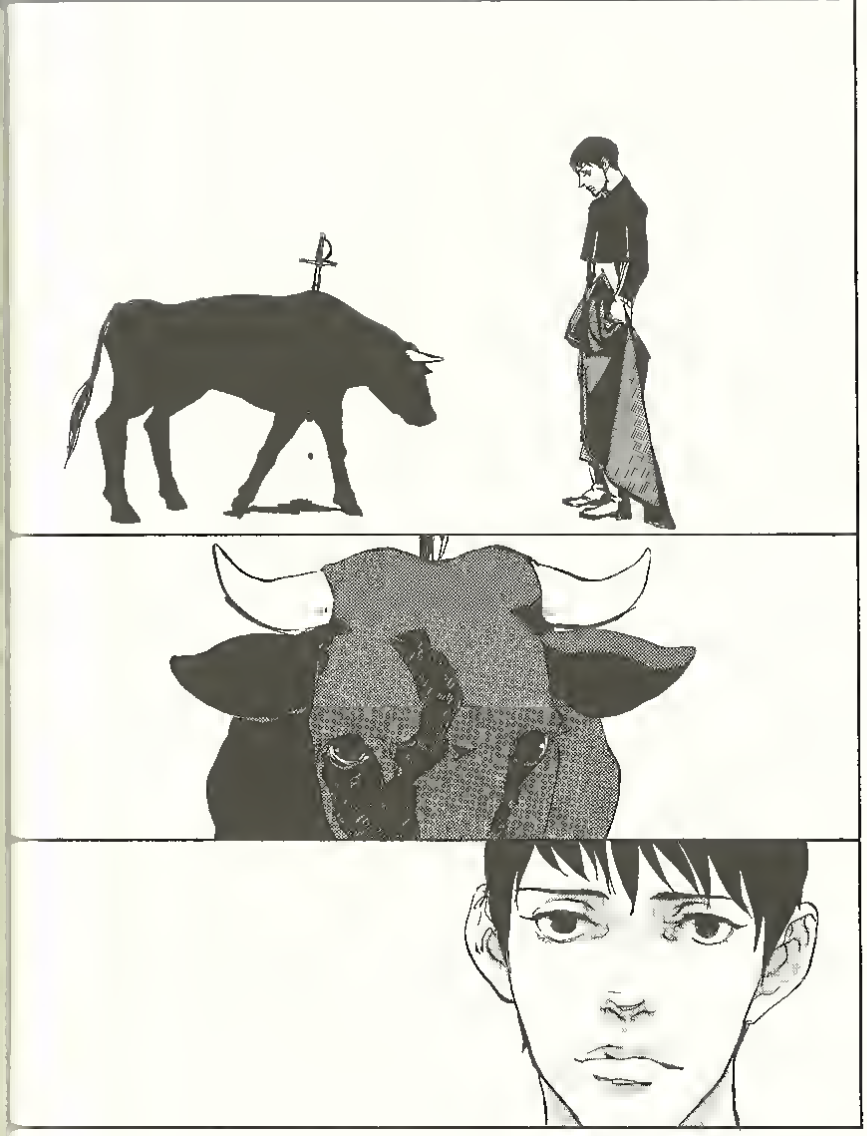


I'll have to check it out myself.
You were as handsome as ever.
No you didn't.
I went straight to the studio after my long trip. I had bags under my eyes and looked like hell.

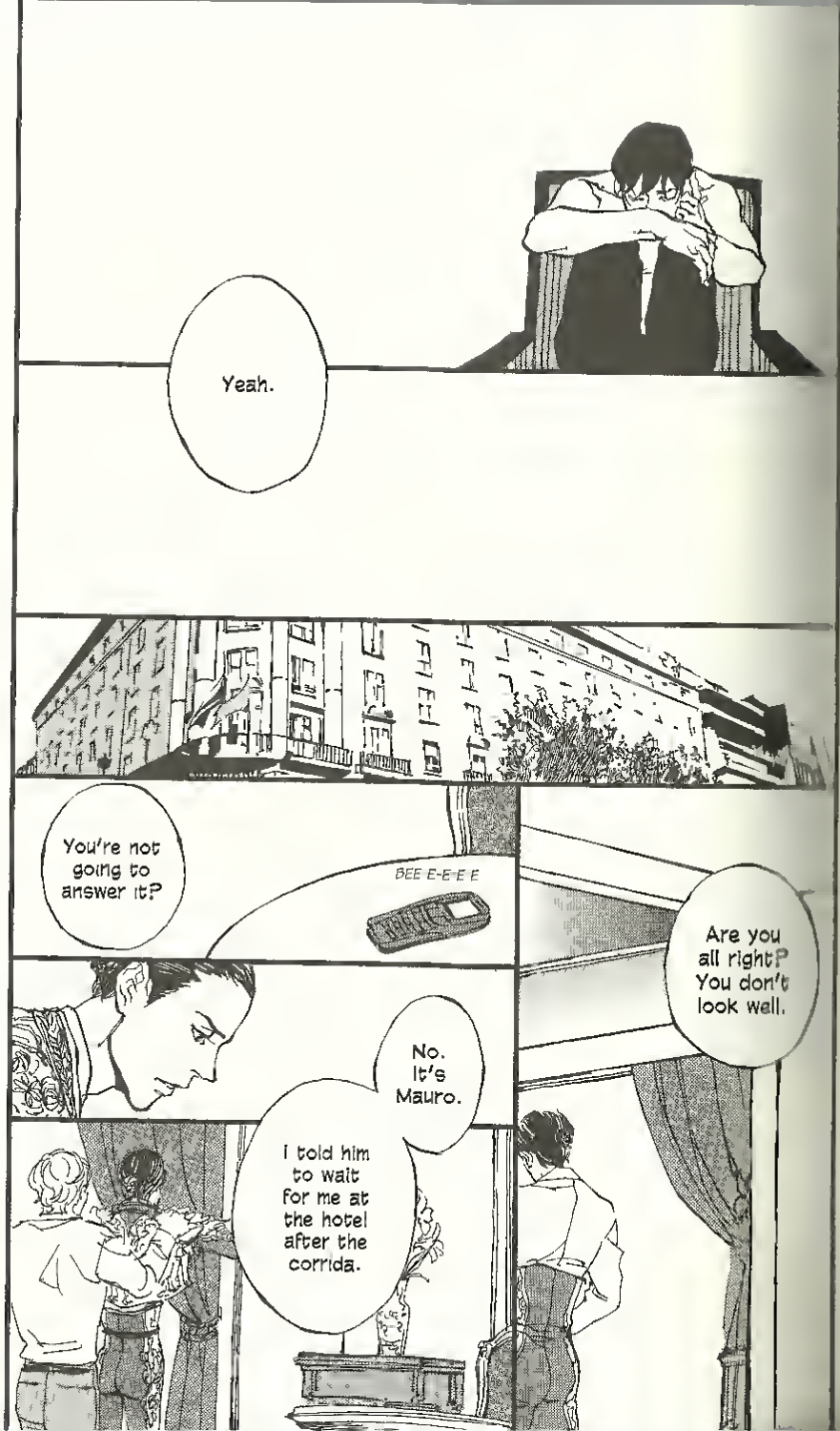
That you're not afraid to face a bull.
Is what true?
Is it true?

From the start.
When did you overcome your fear?
Yeah, it's true.

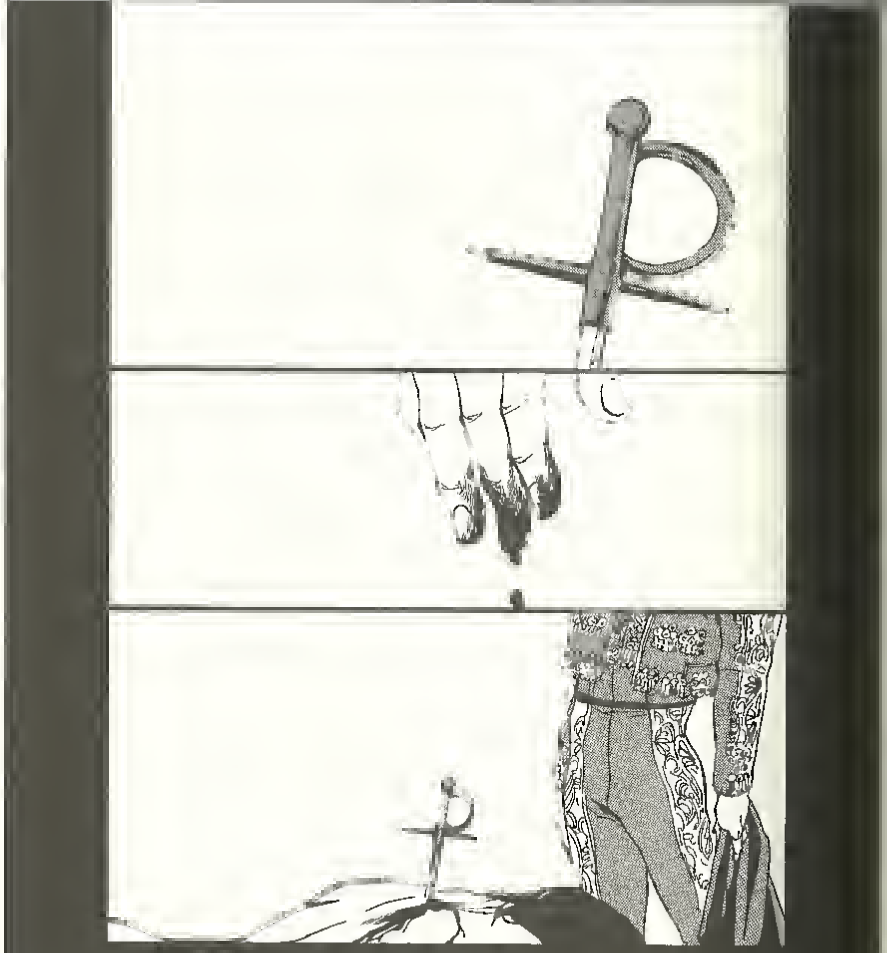


His eyes were so gentle.

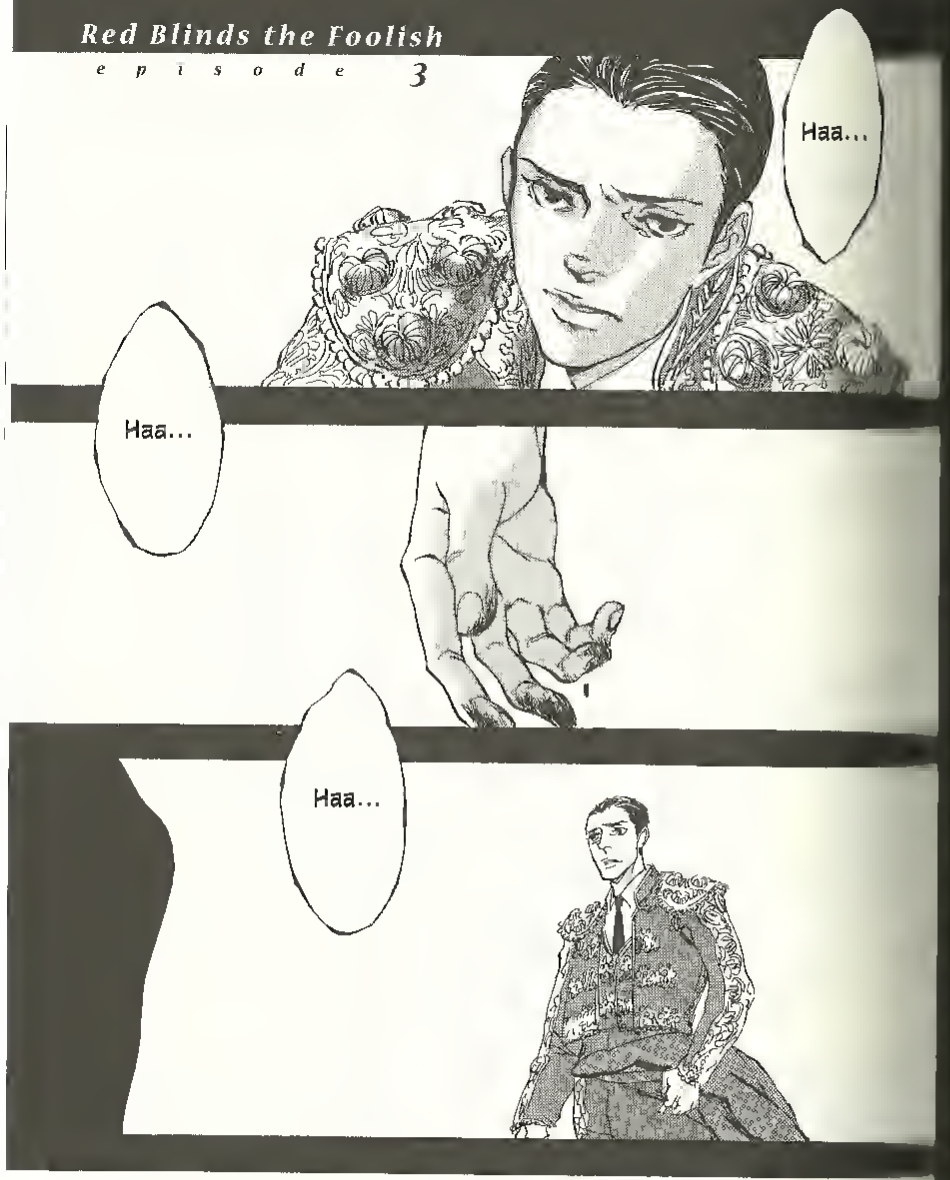

Yeah.
You're not going to answer it?
BEE E-E-E E
No. It's Mauro.
I told him to wait for me at the hotel after the corrida.
Are you all right? You don't look well.

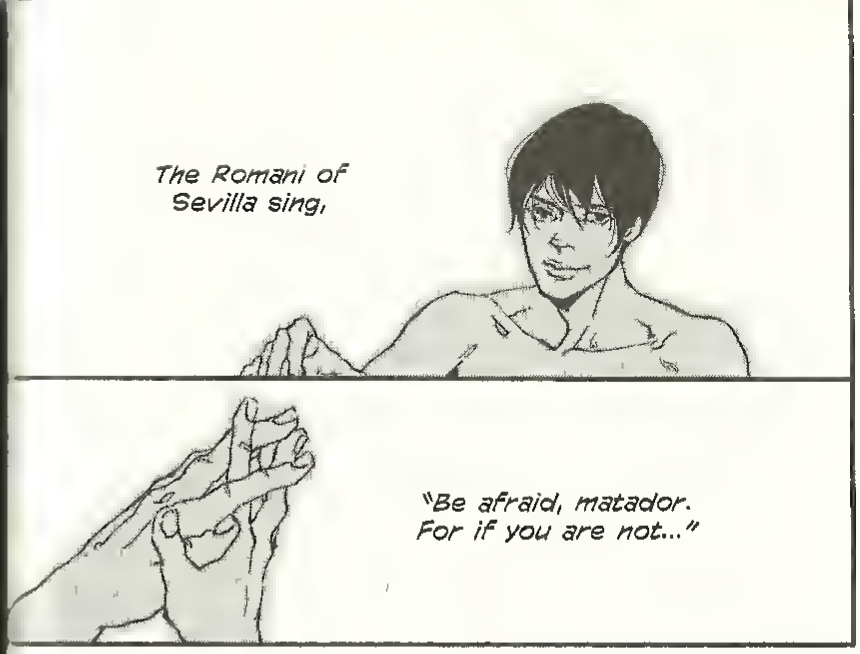
Cut it out. For a second, I imagined how I'd do it.
If I die in the ring, butcher me instead of the bull.
I'd like to see that.
Rafita.
What?
I don't want to lose you.



A DREAM IN WHICH I KILLED YOU.

MAURO, I HAD A DREAM.



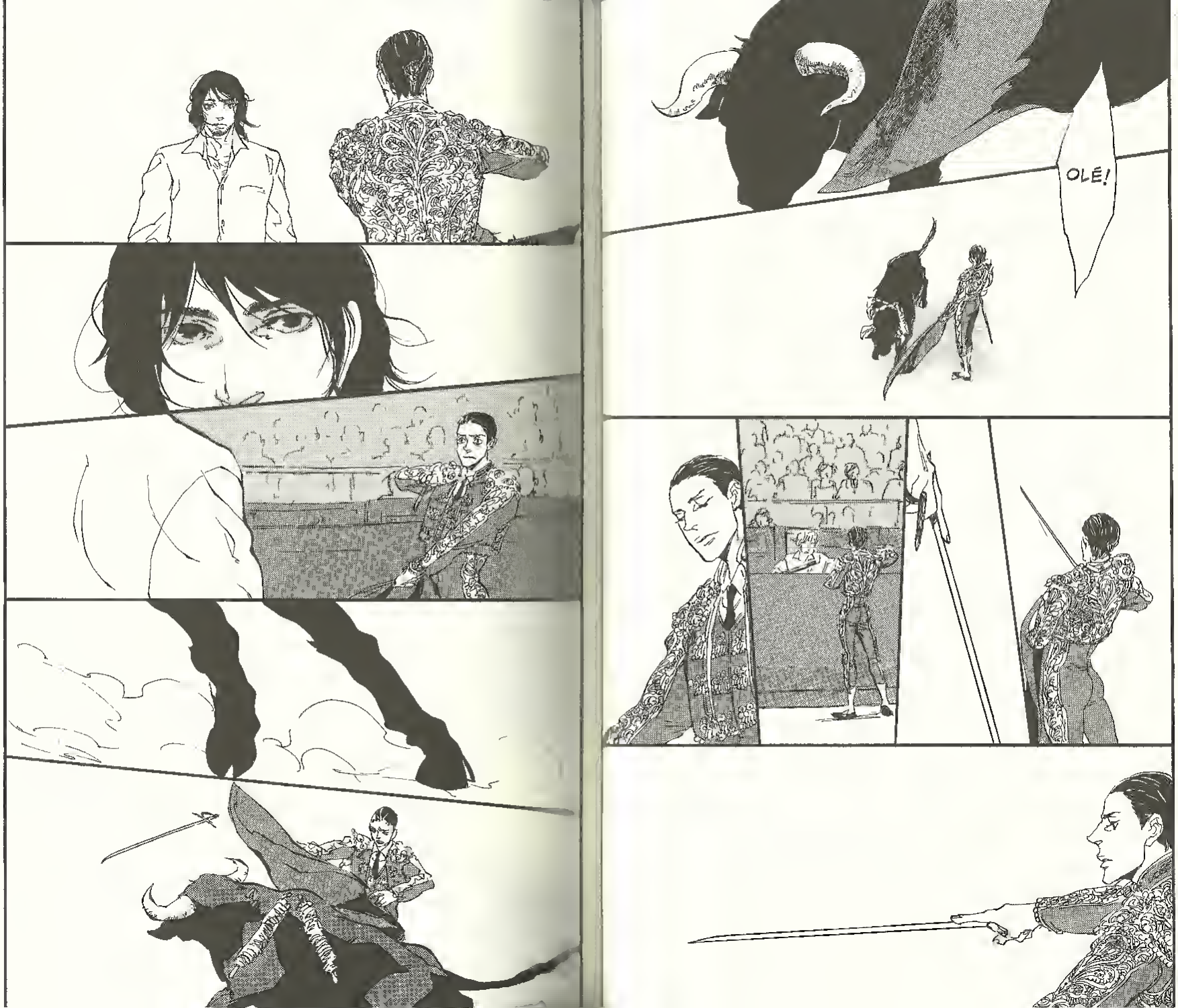




MAURO...

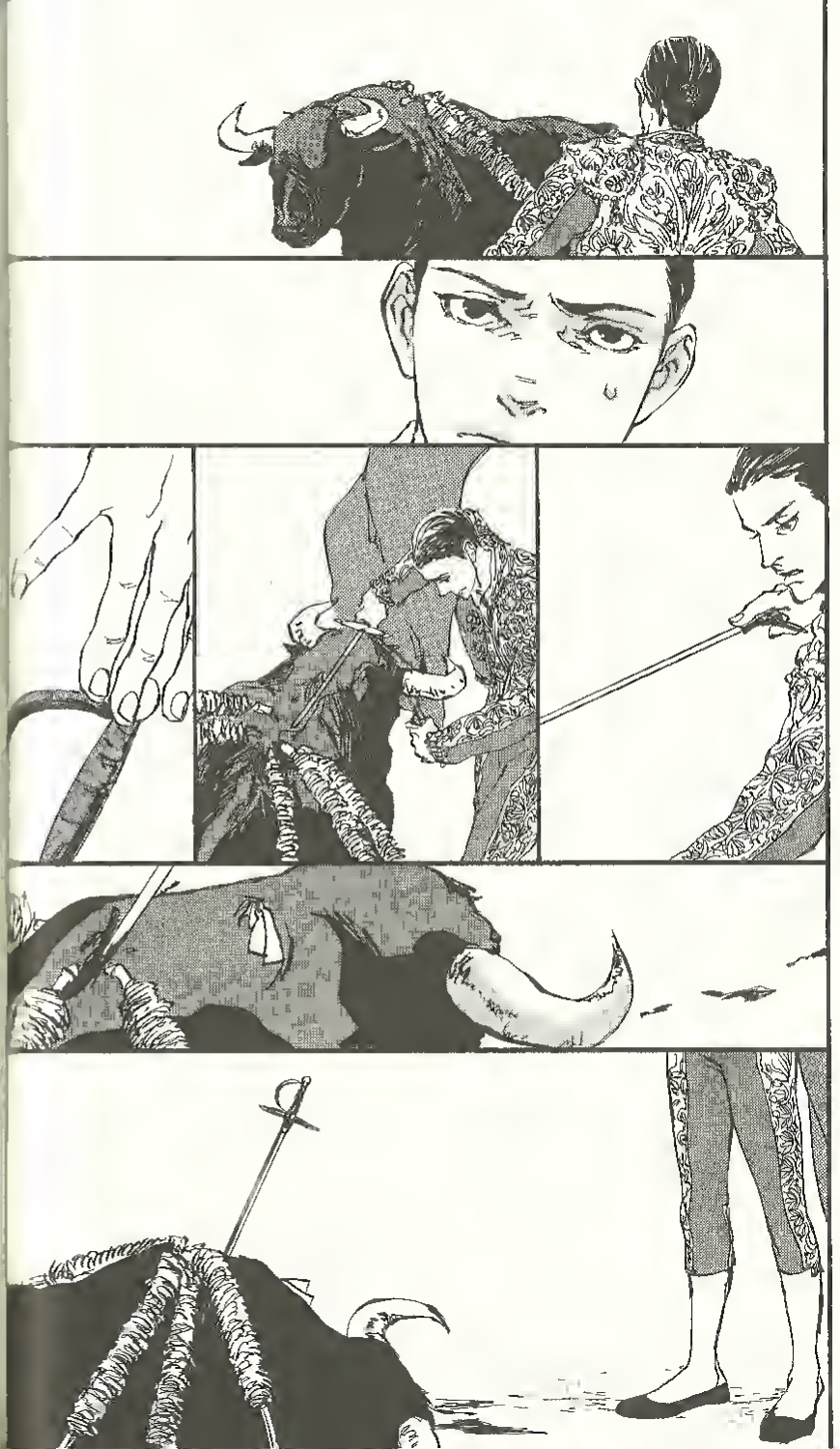
I'M AFRAID.

# *Red Blinds the Foolish*

## *episode 3*

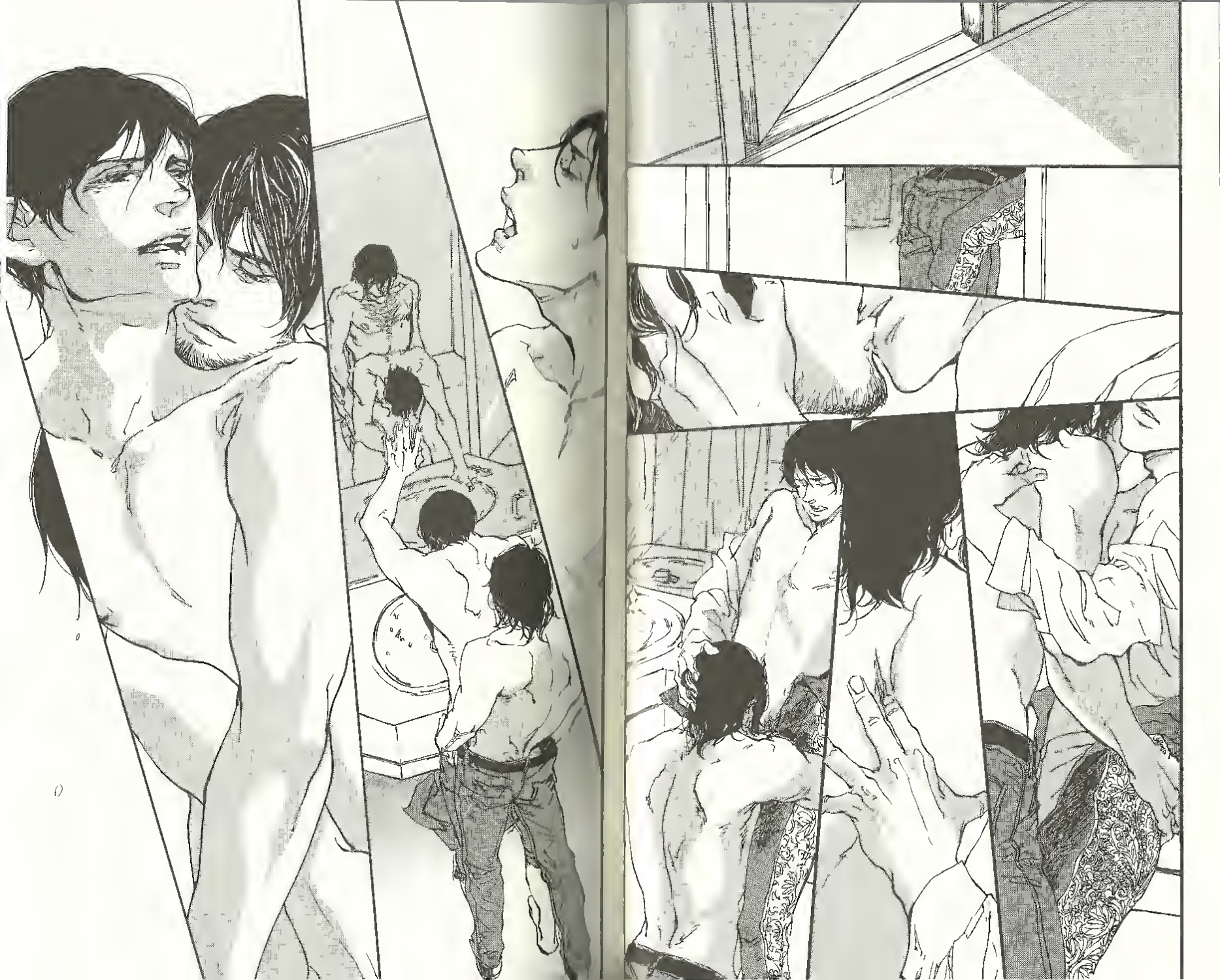

OLÉ!

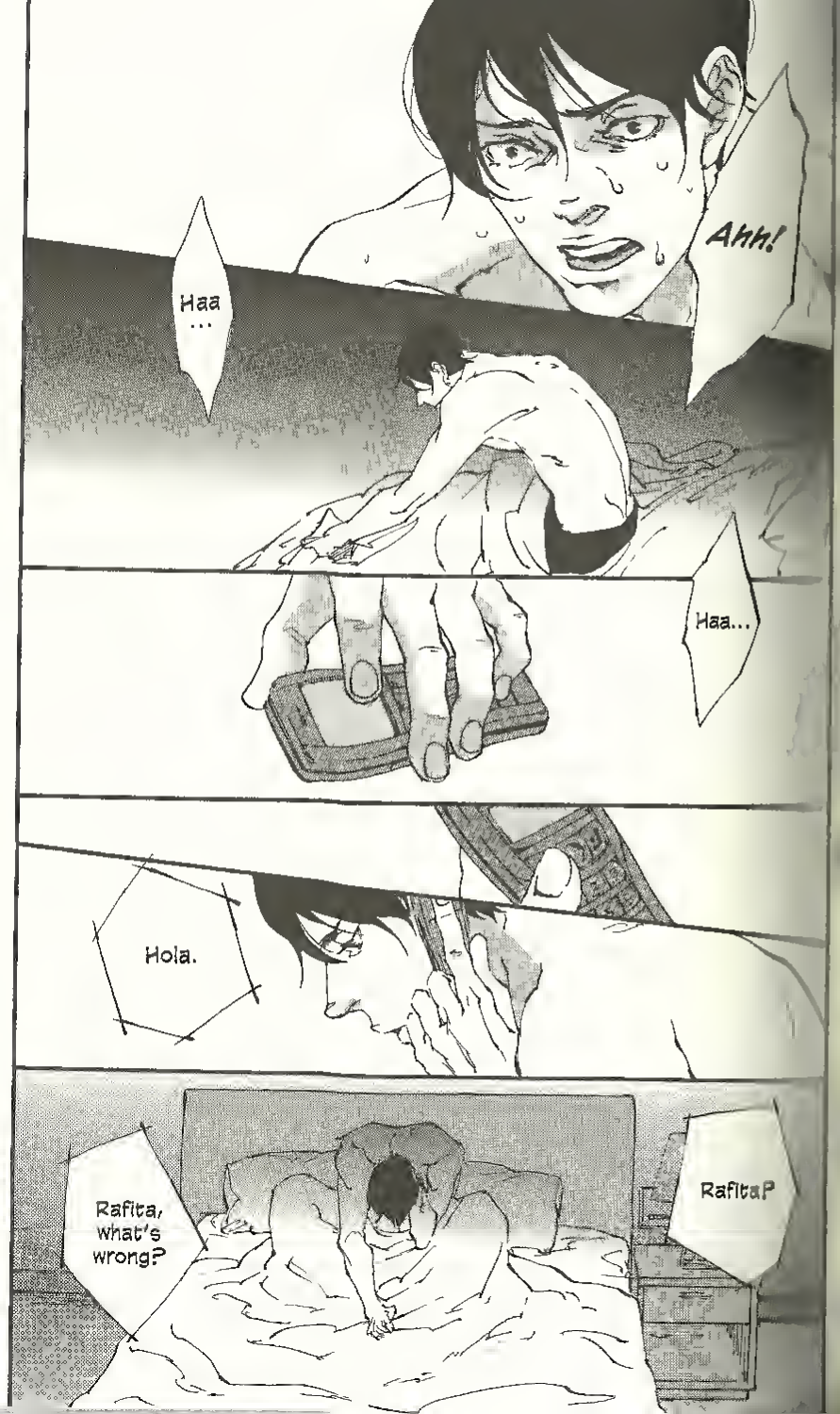
What the hell was wrong with Rafita Alonso?
He hadn't performed in Las Ventas for a while. He was nervous.
No, it was a bad bull.
He was pale as a ghost.
Normally he'd have pulled it off. He's tired.
Well, it's better than taking a risk and getting gored.

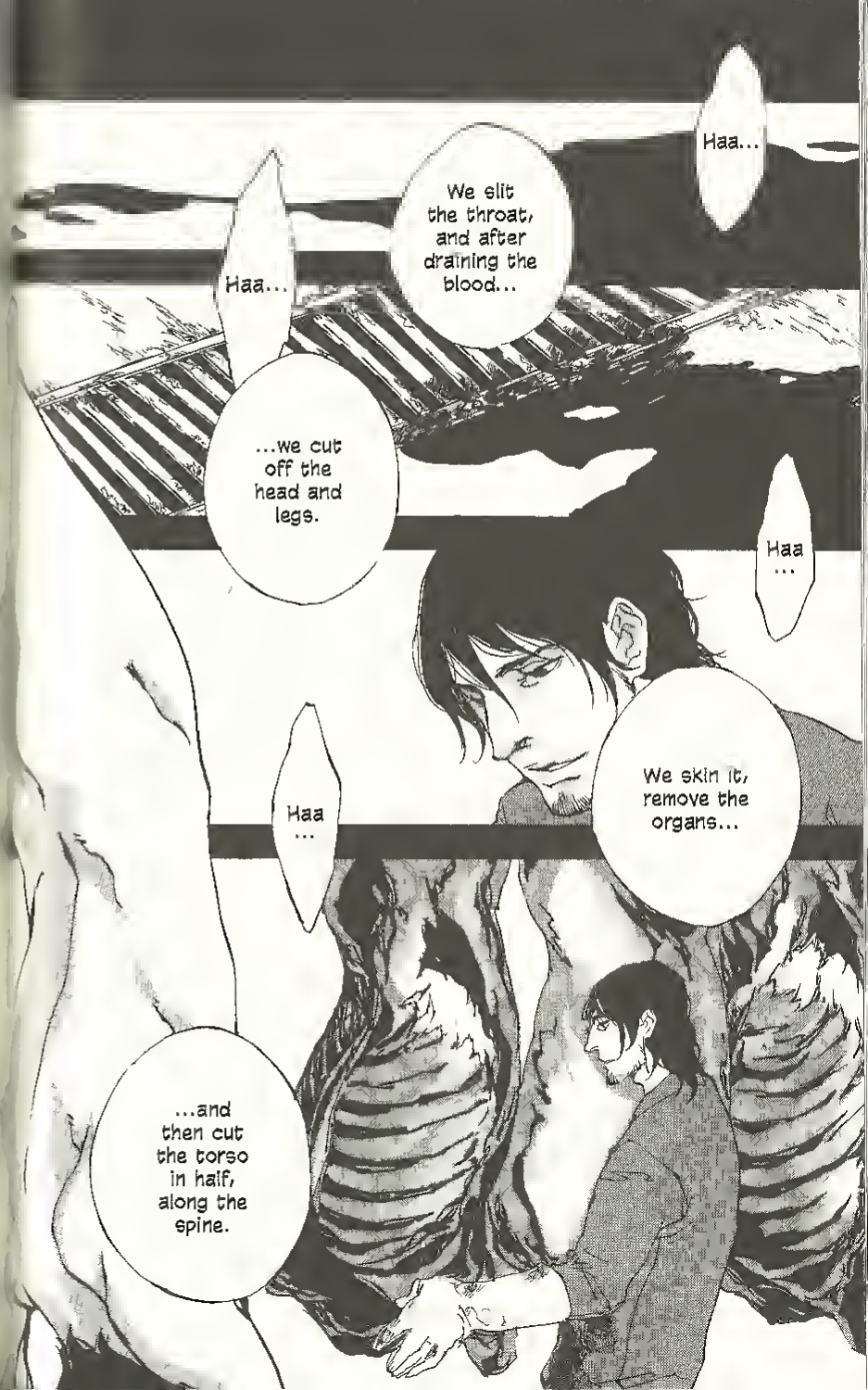


Give me my key.
Long time no see.
What's wrong? You look pale.
I don't want to see anyone today.
But the blood.
I'll clean it myself.

It's a good thing you stepped back, Rafita.
If you hadn't, you'd be dead now, gored straight through the heart.
You made a good call in a tight spot.

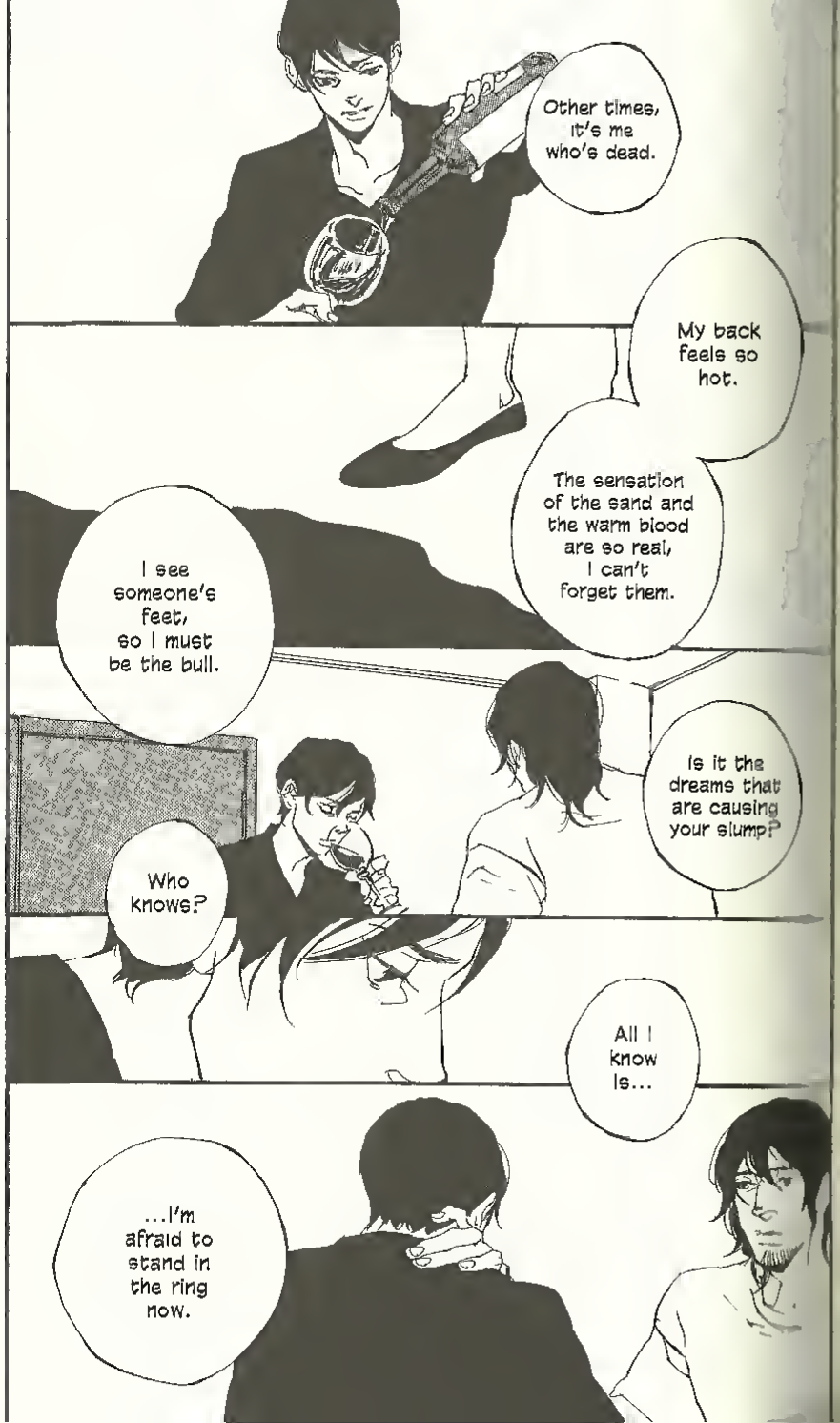


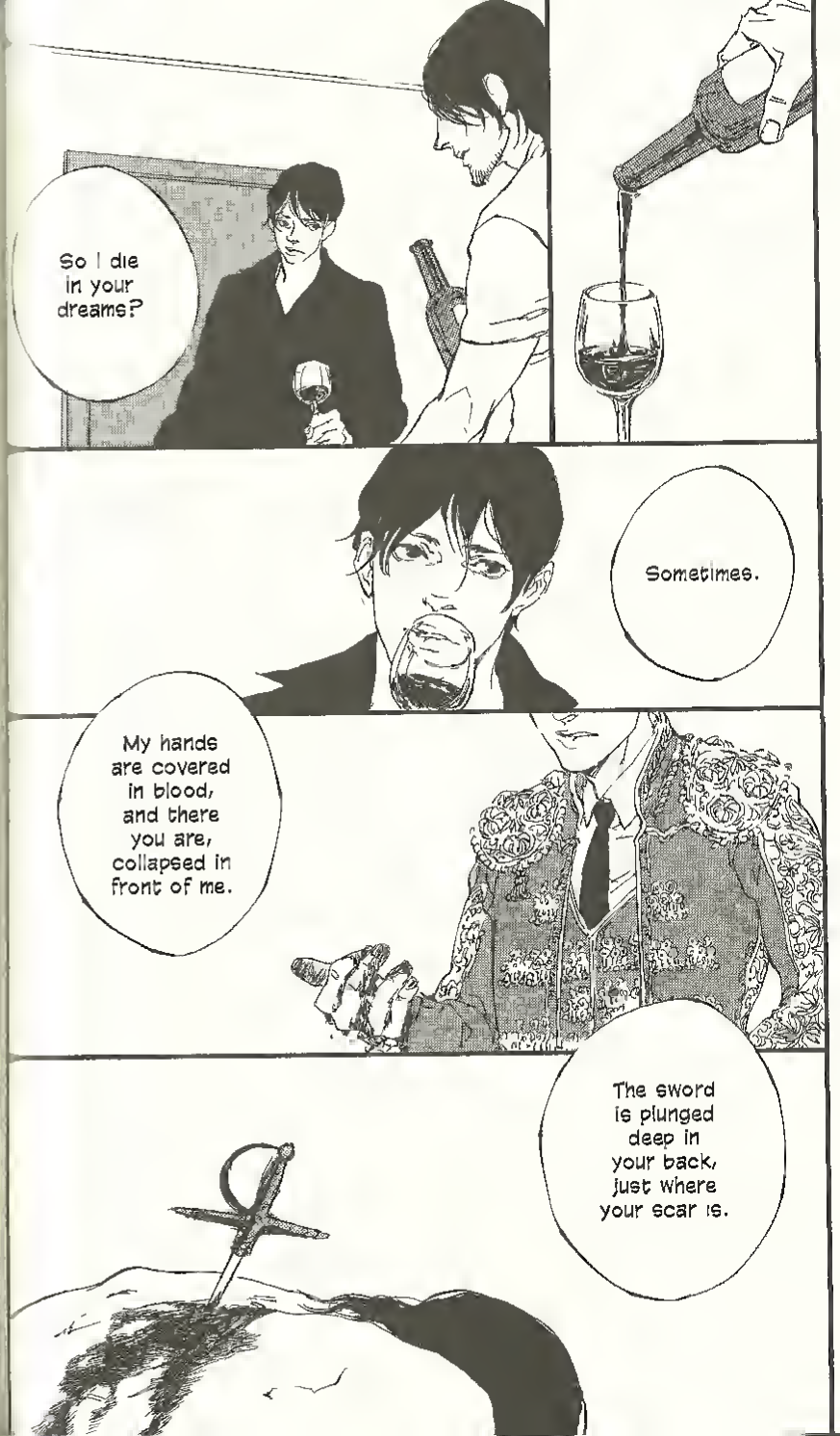

Haa...
Ahh!
Haa...
Hola.
Rafita, what's wrong?
Rafita?

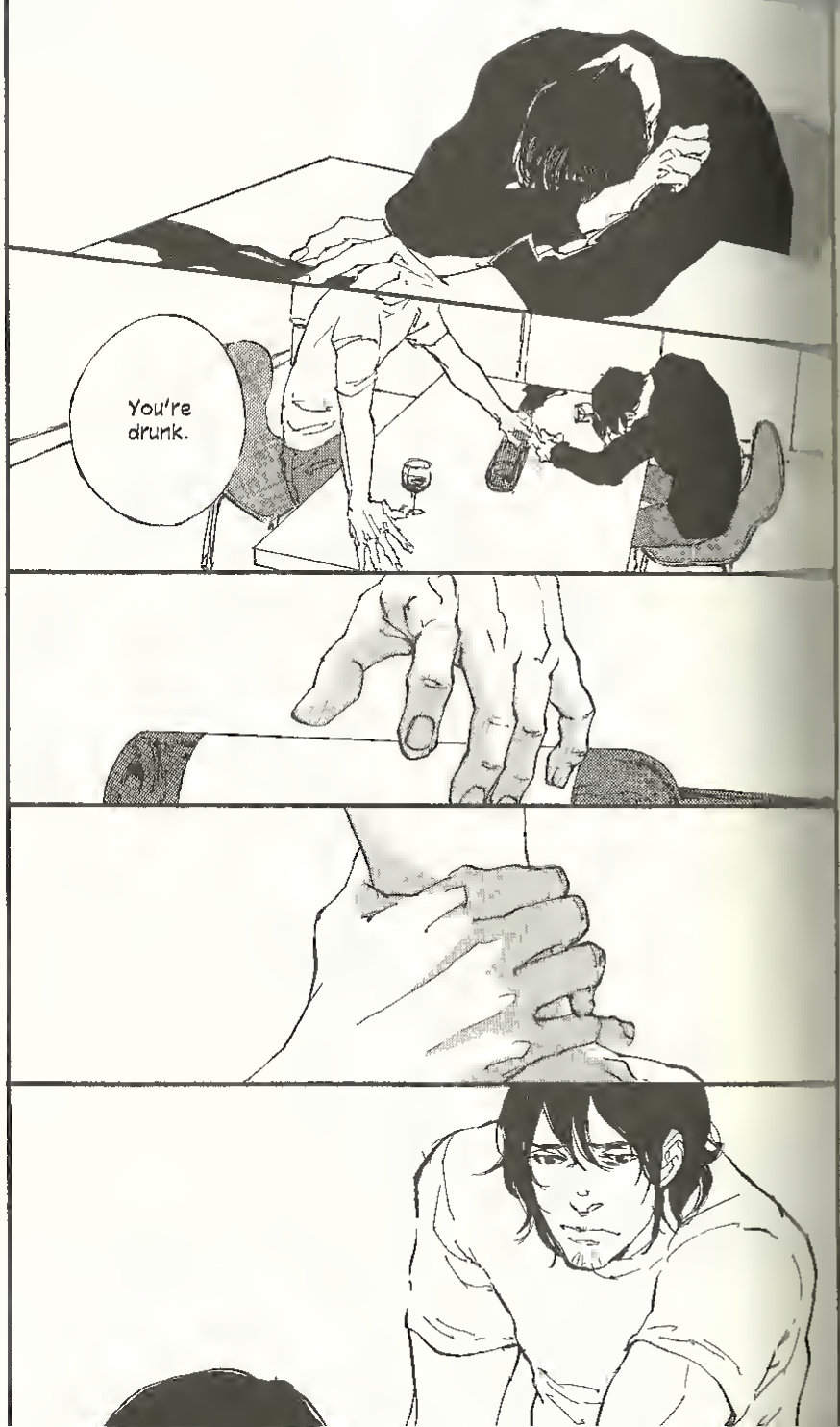

Haa...
We slit the throat, and after draining the blood...
Haa...
...we cut off the head and legs.
Haa...
Haa...
We skin it, remove the organs...
...and then cut the torso in half, along the spine.

Perfect timing. Can you give me a light?
!
You came just to get a light?
I went out to buy cigarettes and thought I'd stop by.
Long way to come to buy cigarettes.

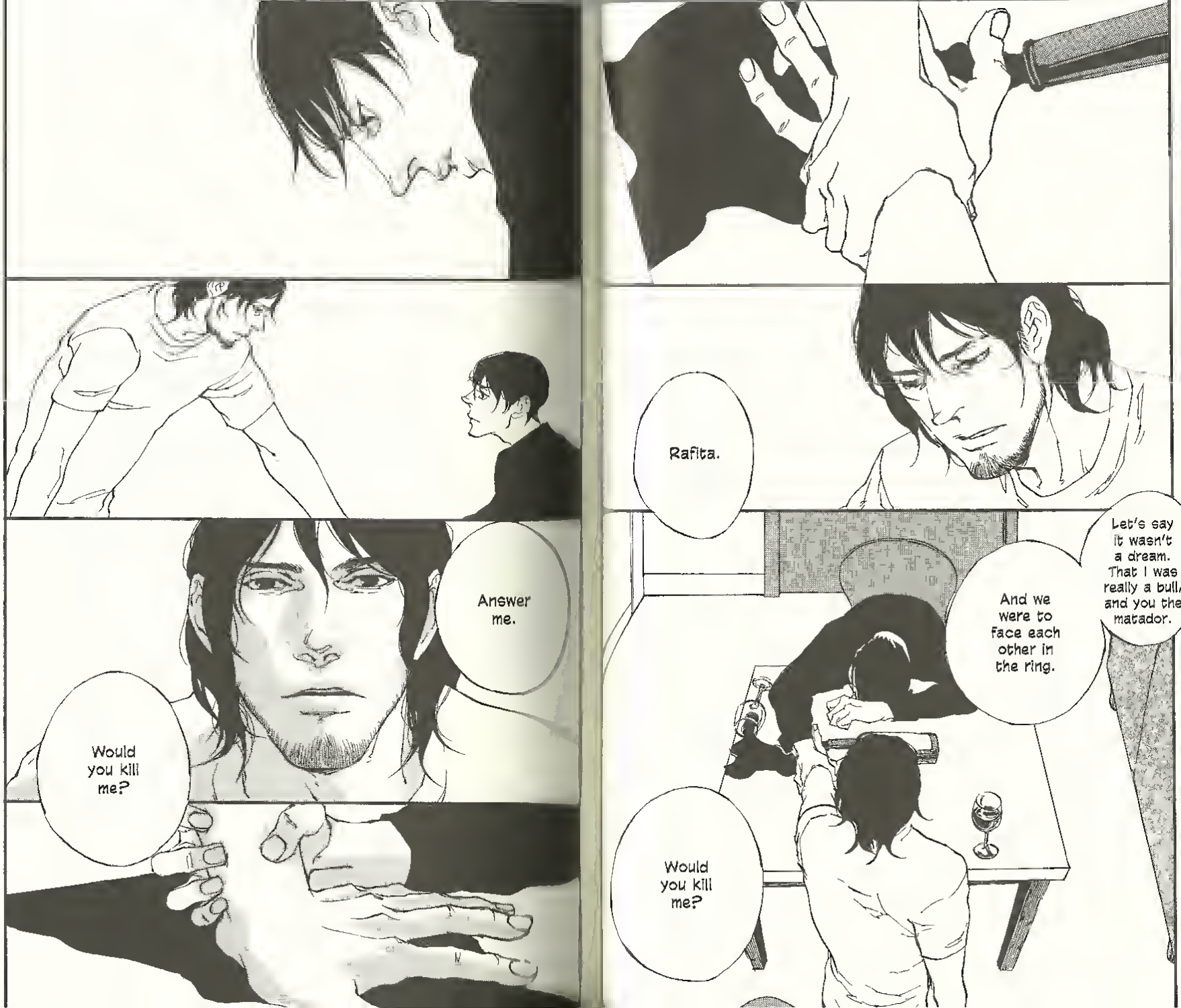
What, no ears for Alonso again?
He started off so brilliantly He couldn't keep that up forever.
Yeah, but this is so sudden.
He's young. Everyone has his ups and downs.
That must be *some* woman! Ha ha ha. Lucky guy.
If you ask me, there's a woman behind it.

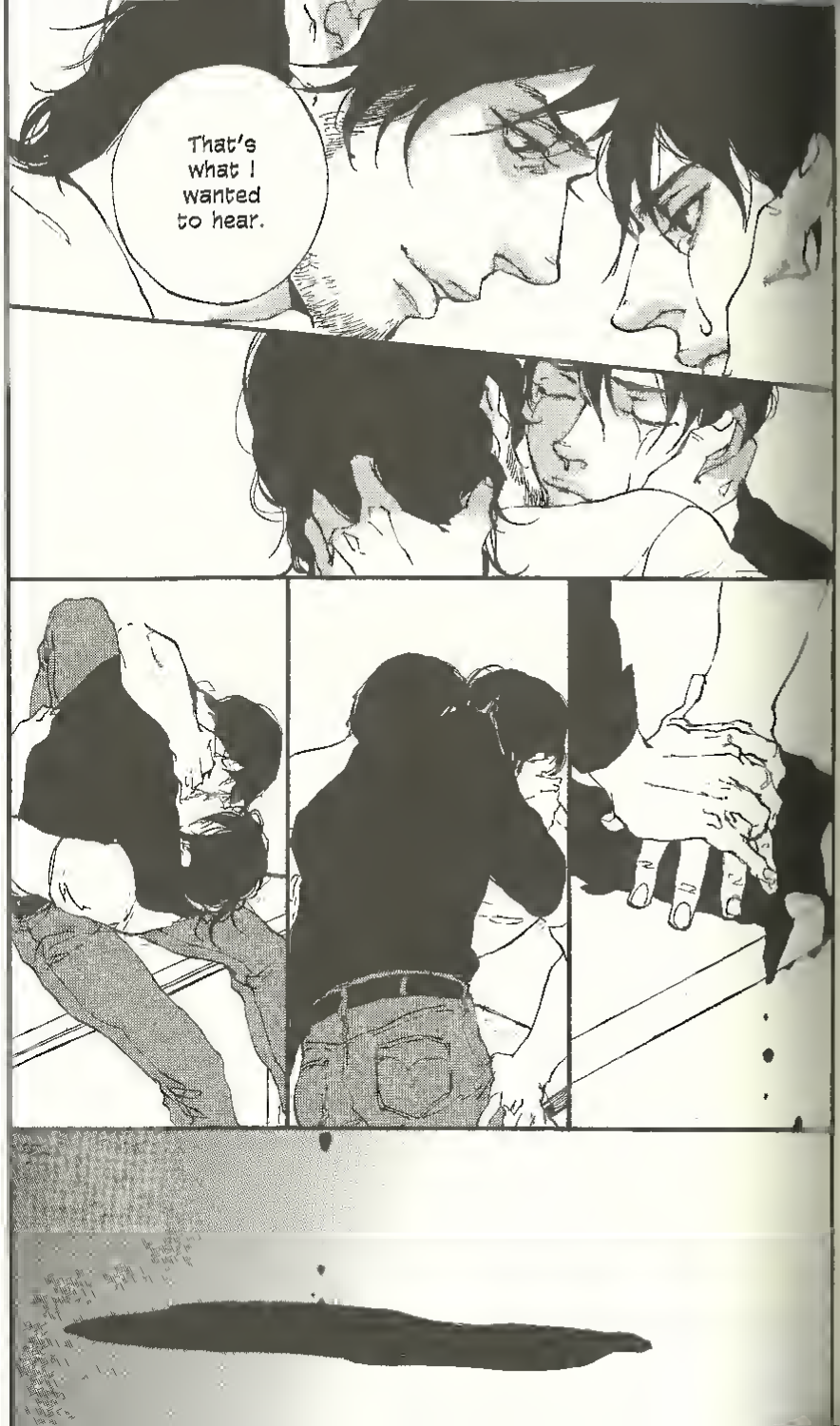

Other times, it's me who's dead.
My back feels so hot.
The sensation of the sand and the warm blood are so real, I can't forget them.
I see someone's feet, so I must be the bull.
Is it the dreams that are causing your slump?
Who knows?
All I know is...
...I'm afraid to stand in the ring now.


So I die in your dreams?
Sometimes.
My hands are covered in blood, and there you are, collapsed in front of me.
The sword is plunged deep in your back, just where your scar is.

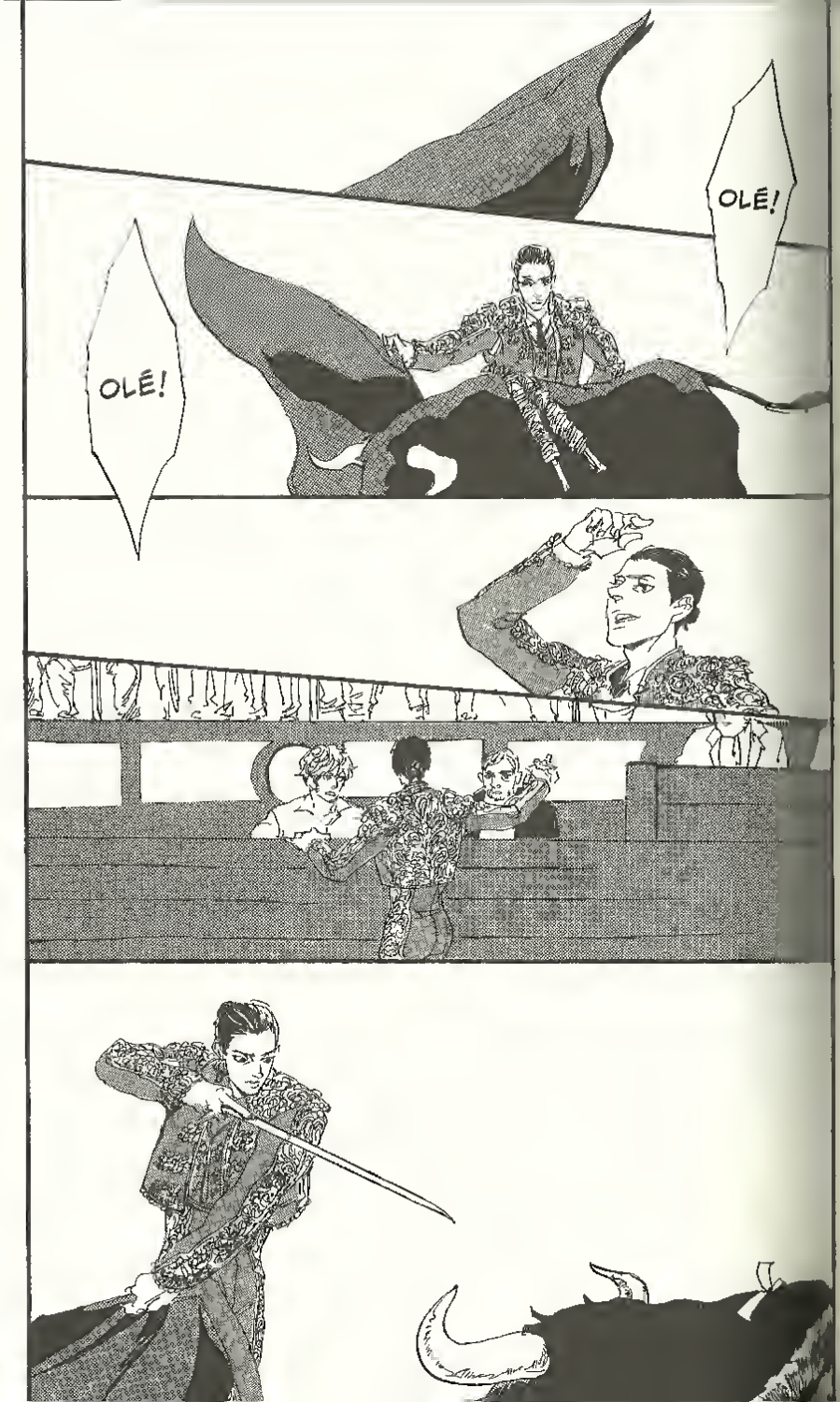

You're drunk.

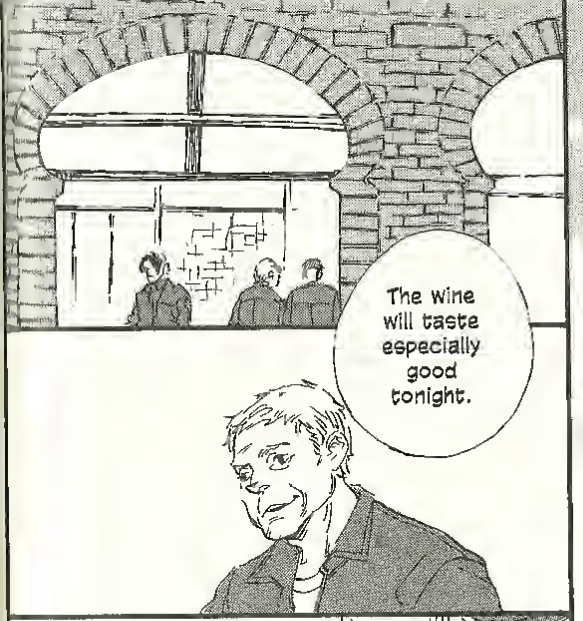
Is it my fault?
Don't flatter yourself.
Ha ha ha...
Heh heh...


Rafita.
Let's say it wasn't a dream. That I was really a bull, and you the matador.
And we were to face each other in the ring.
Would you kill me?
Answer me.
Would you kill me?


That's what I wanted to hear.

Yes, I would kill you.
Because I am a matador.

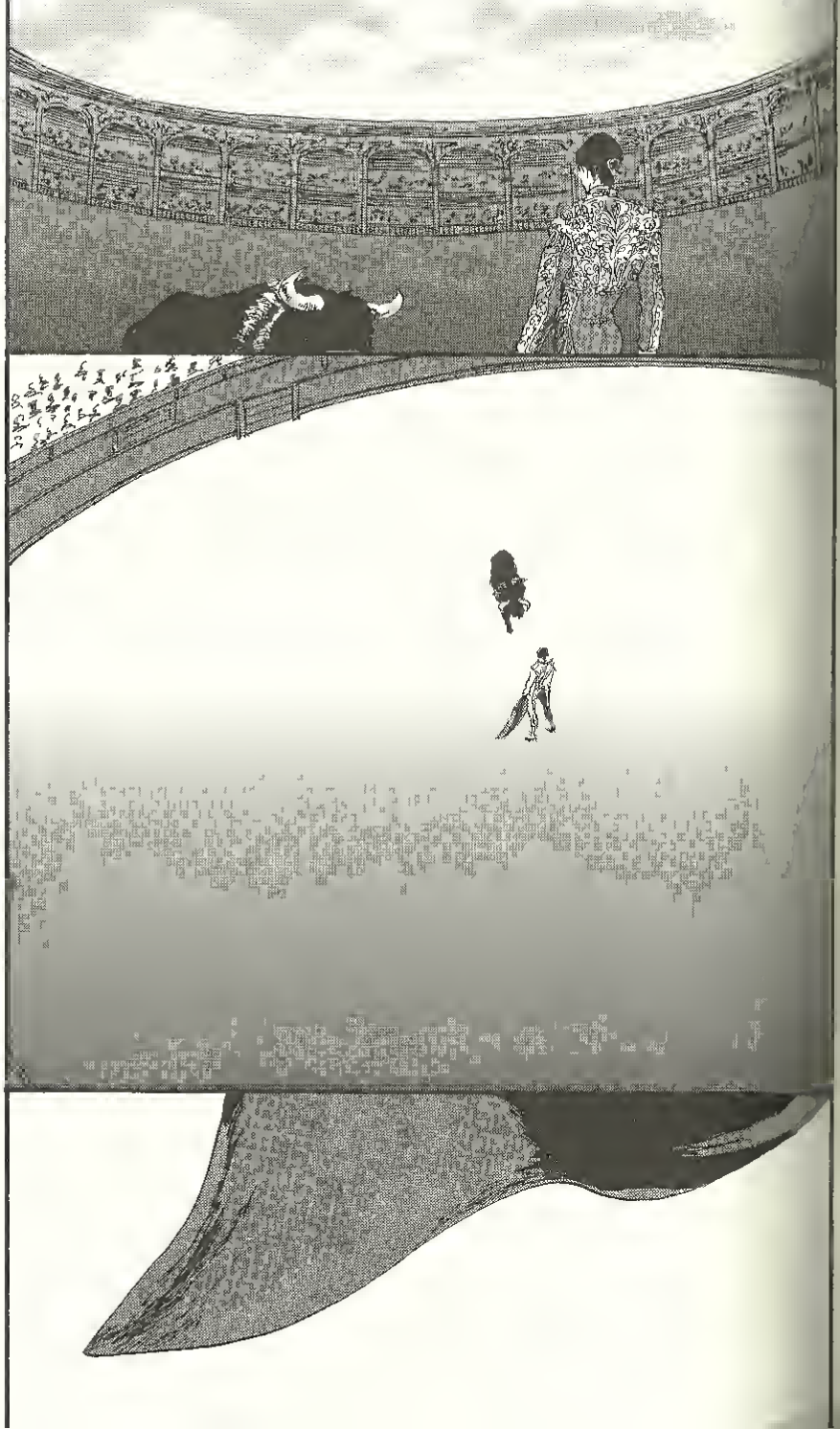

OLÉ!
OLÉ!

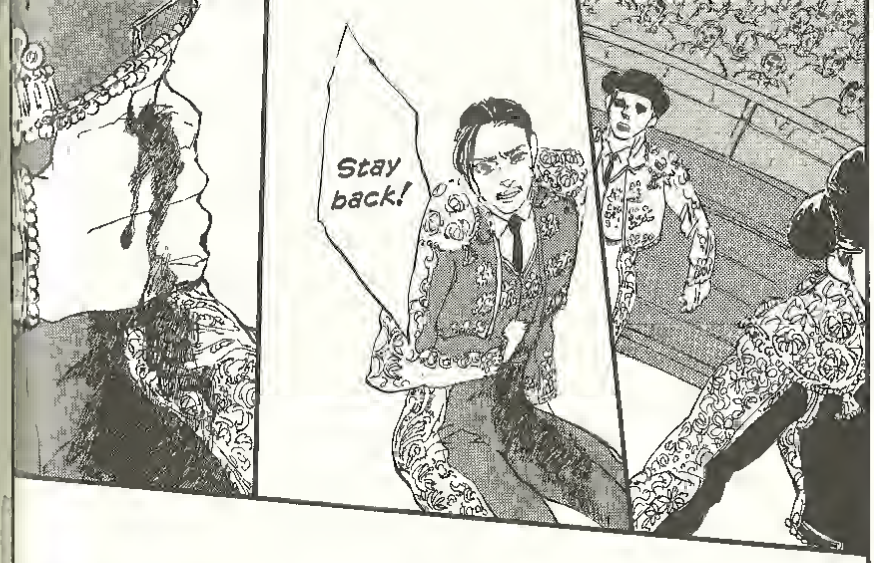

The wine will taste especially good tonight.

Alonso got an ear for his first bull.

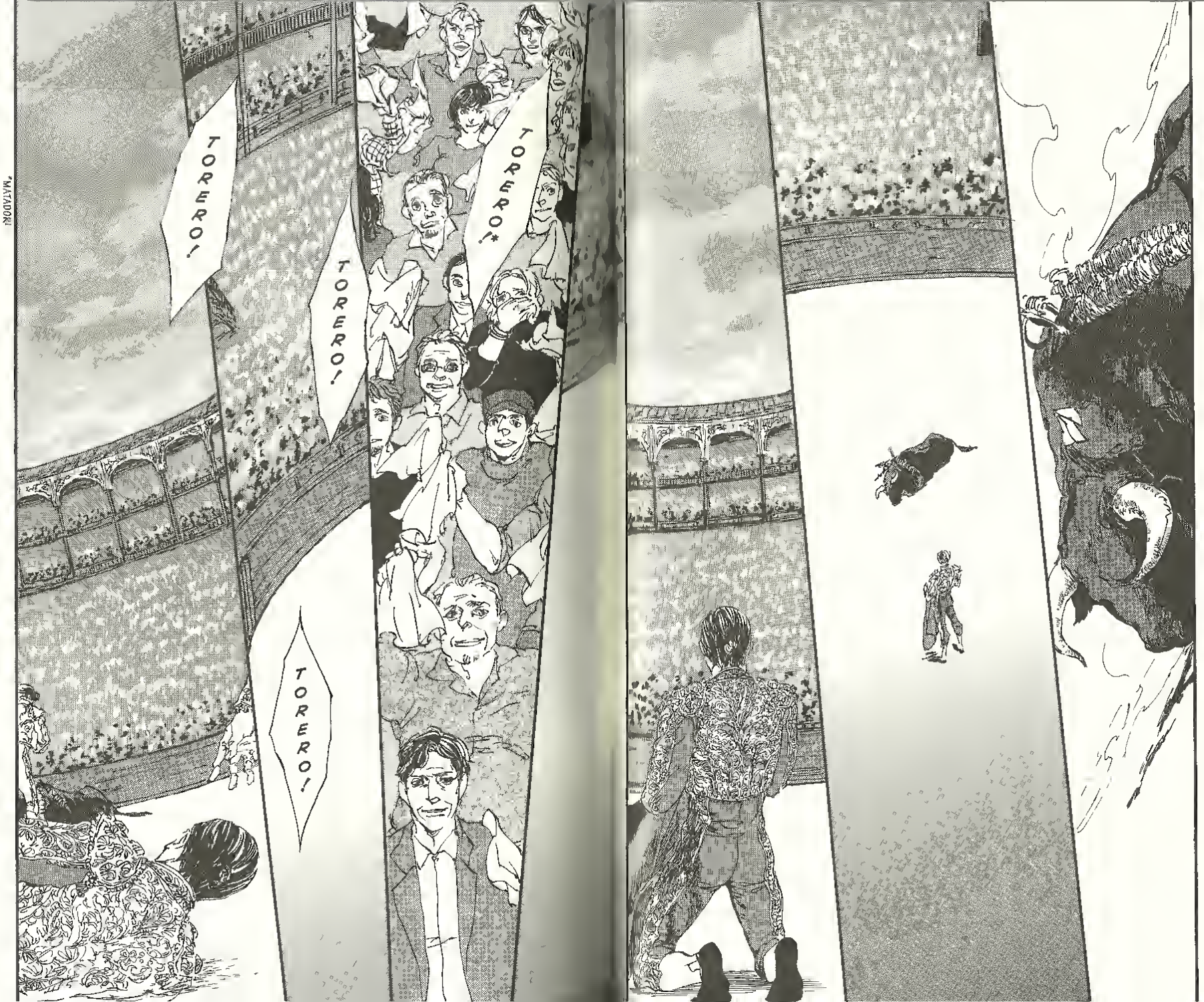
He's finally back in form.

PLAZA DE TOROS

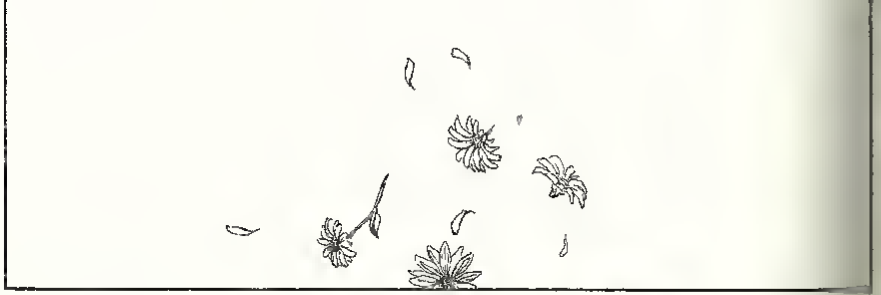


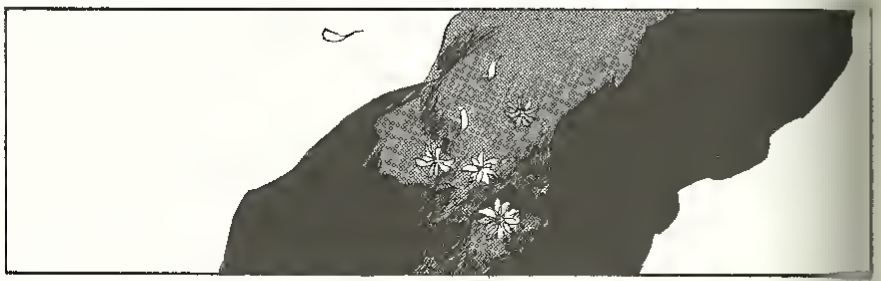

Stay back!

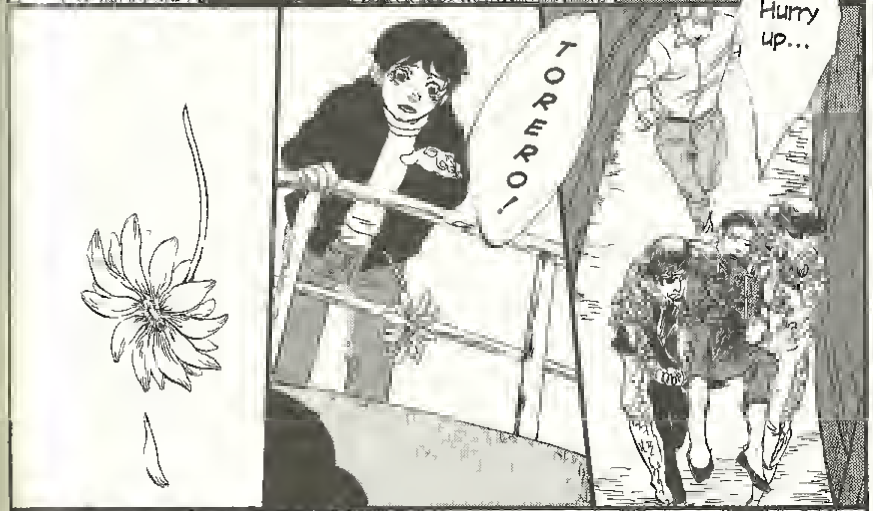
I'll finish.

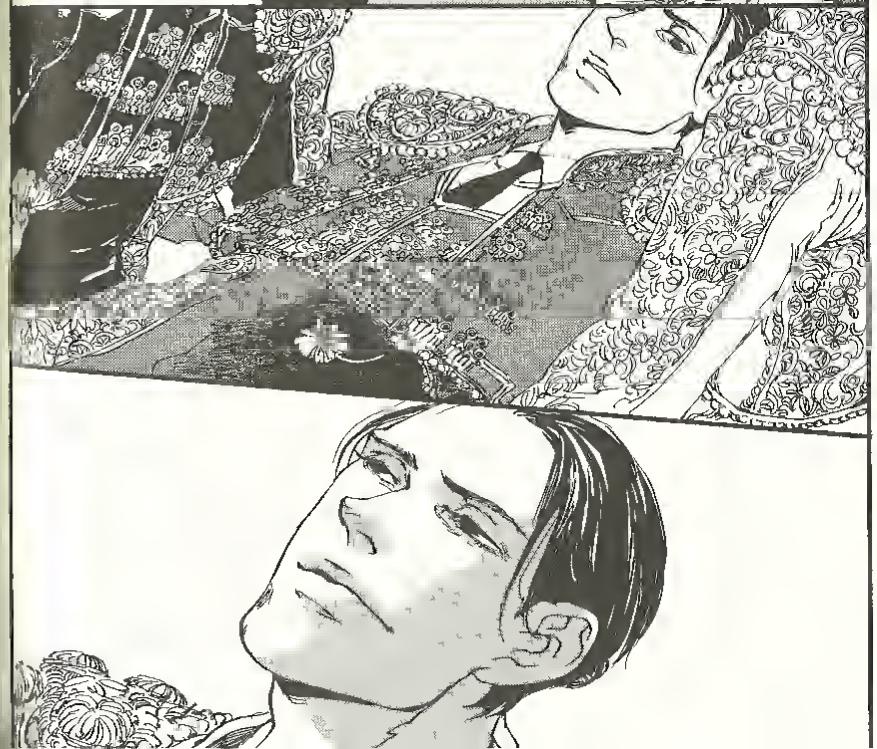


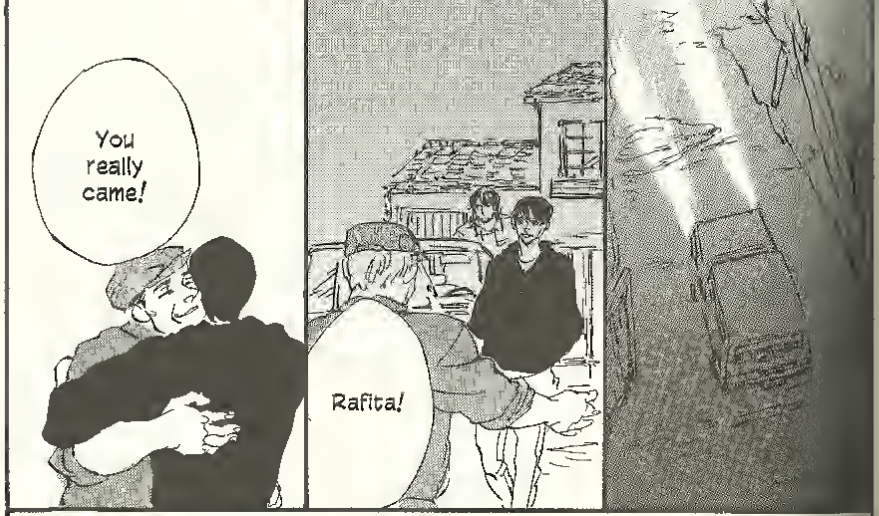

*MATADOR!



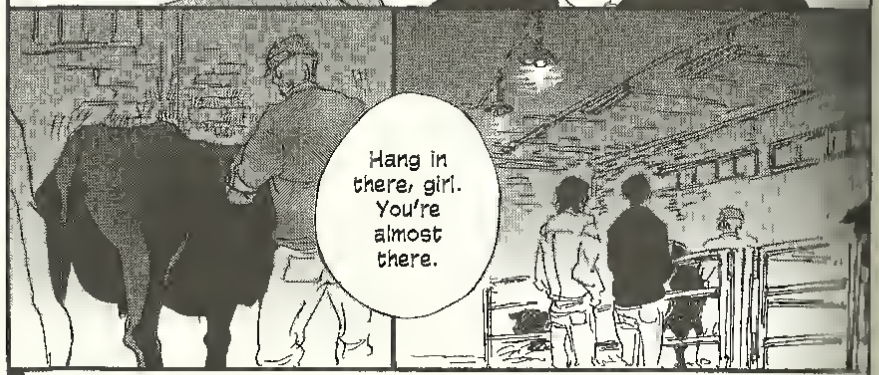


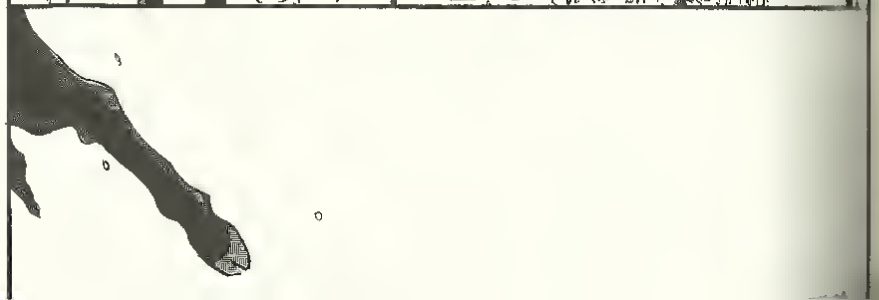

TORERO!
Hurry up...

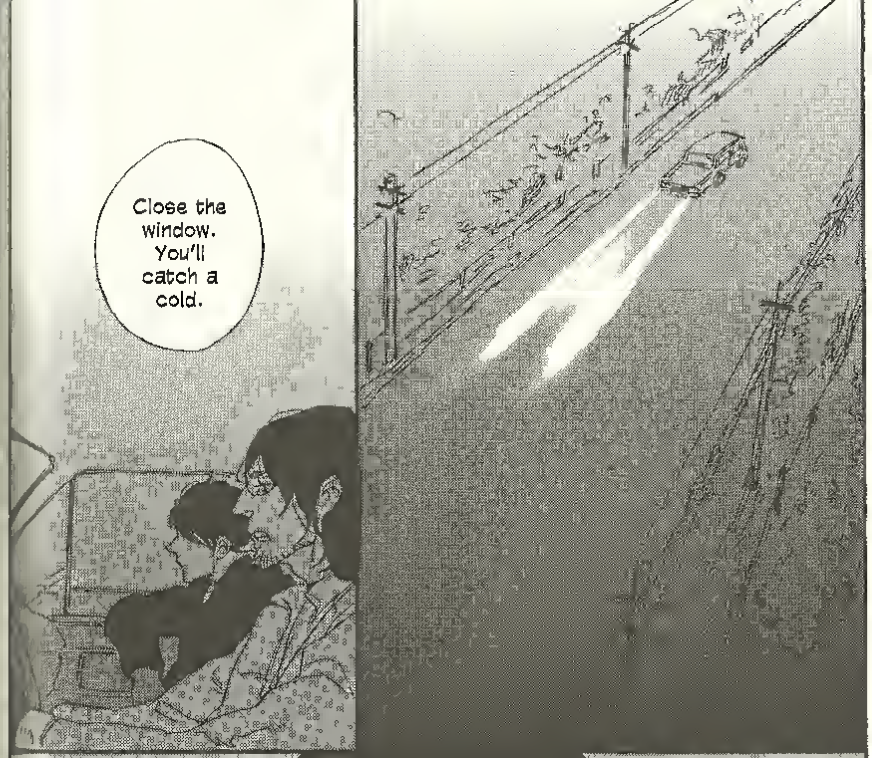



You really came!
Rafita!

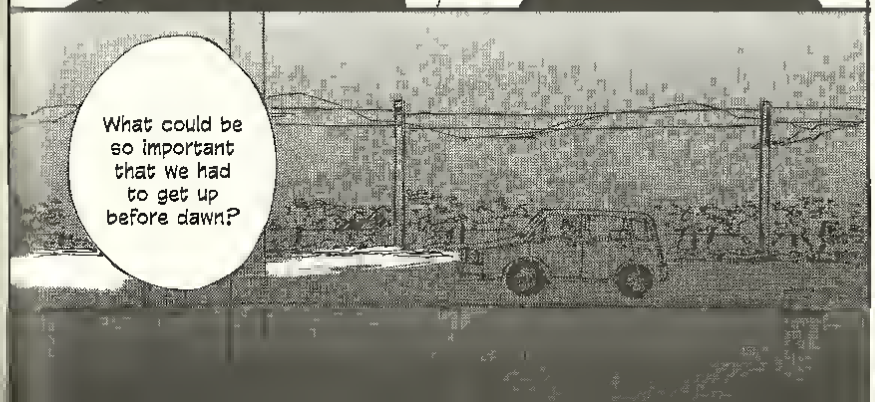
It's coming, but it's a hard delivery.
How's the calf?

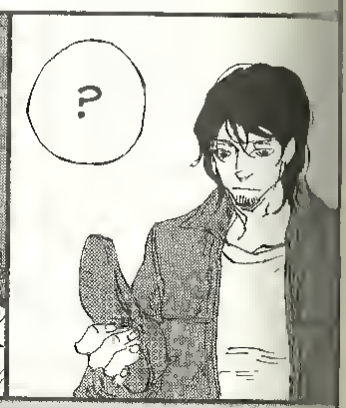

Hang in there, girl. You're almost there.




Close the window. You'll catch a cold.

No, the wind feels good.


What could be so important that we had to get up before dawn?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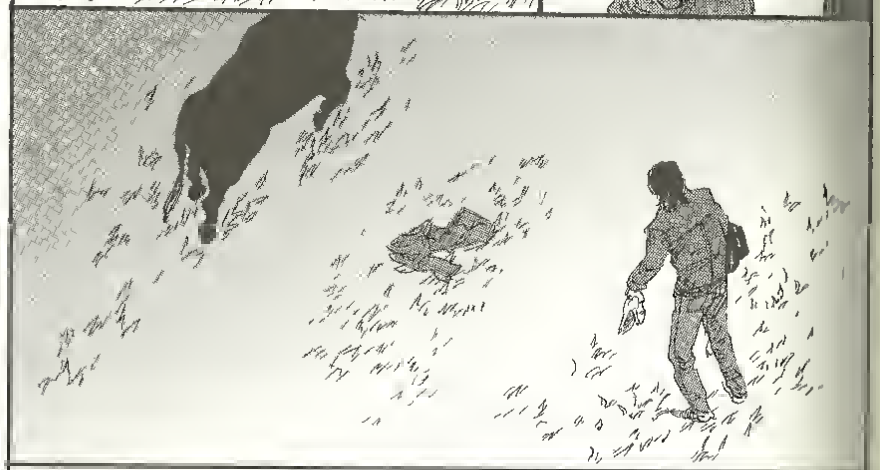
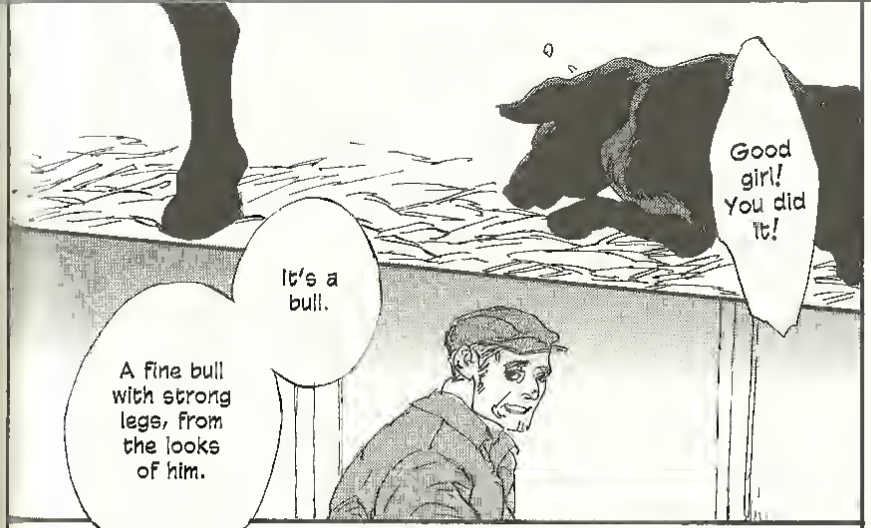
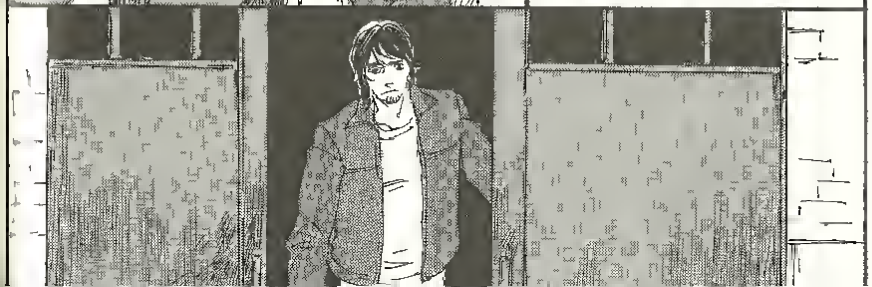
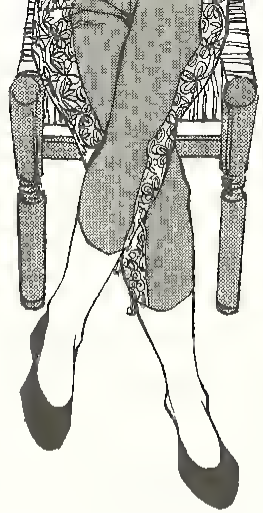



Good girl! You did it!
It's a bull.
A fine bull with strong legs, from the looks of him.

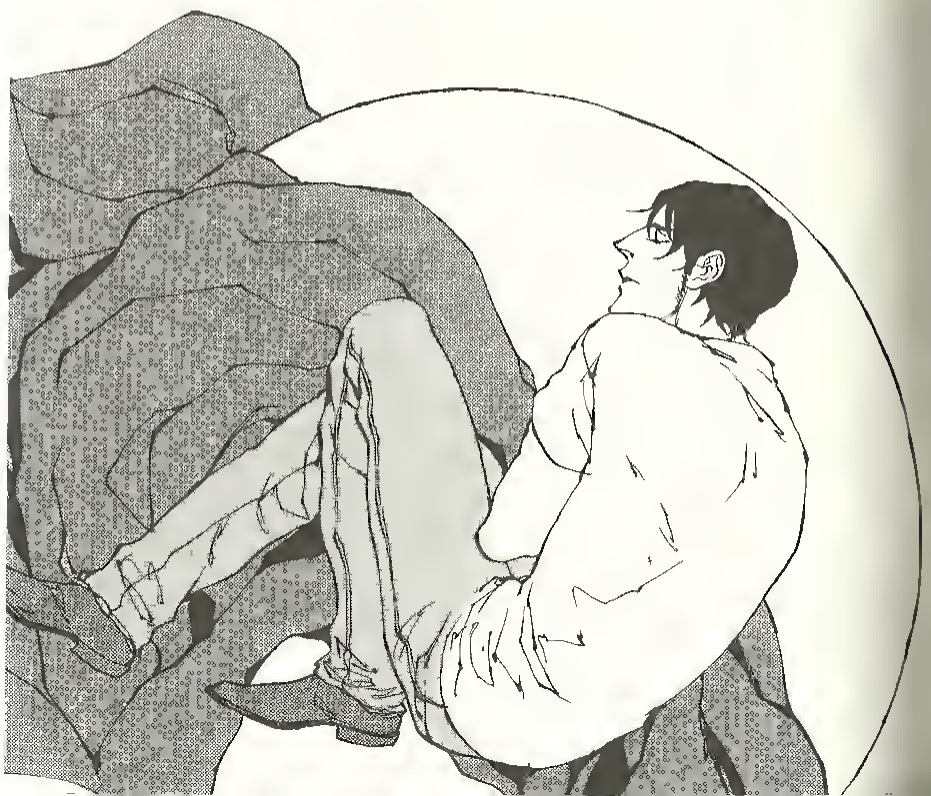
Rafita?



Aren't they beautiful?
Now you'll catch a cold!
Rafita!

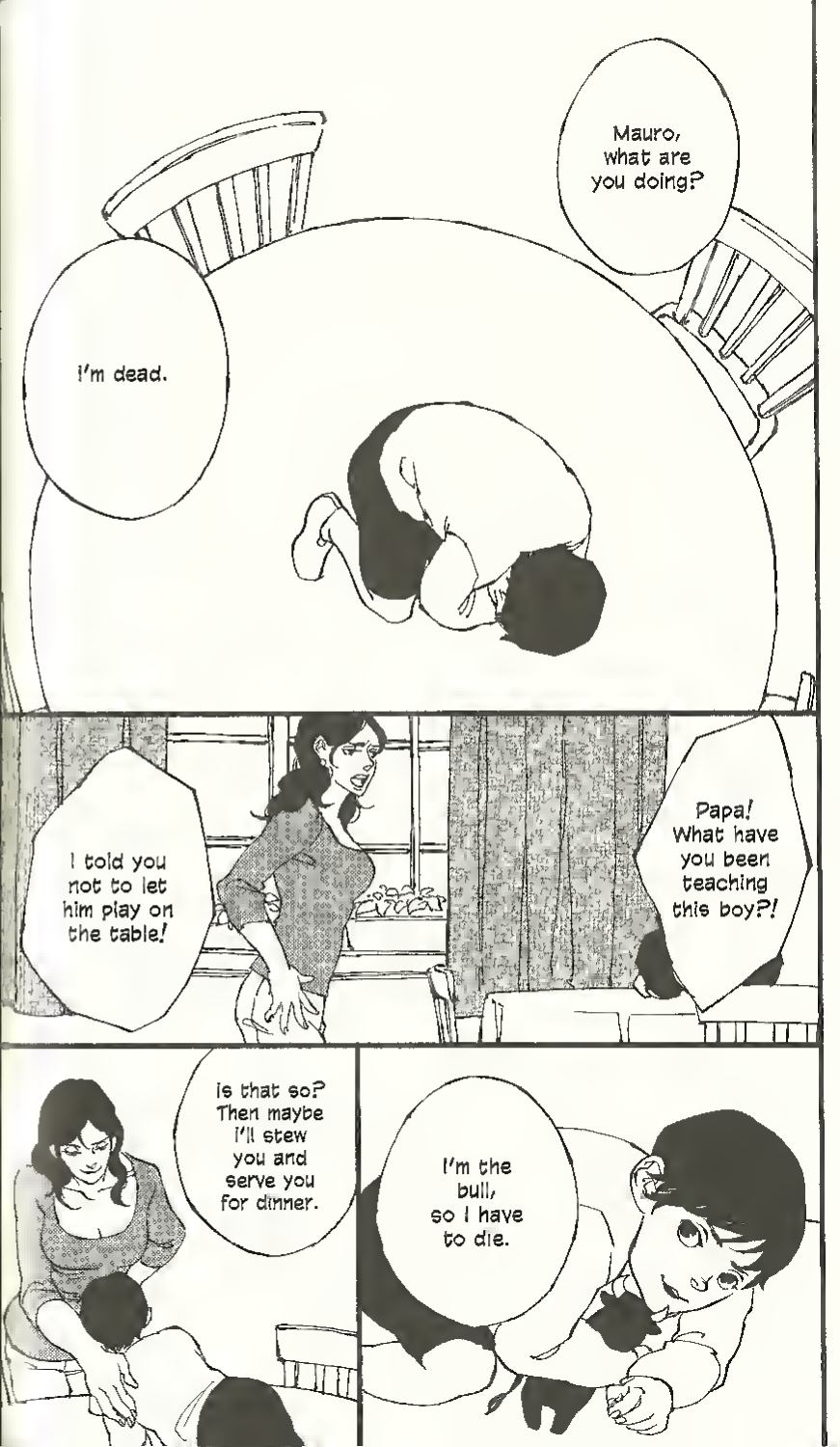


## *Corpse of the Round Table*



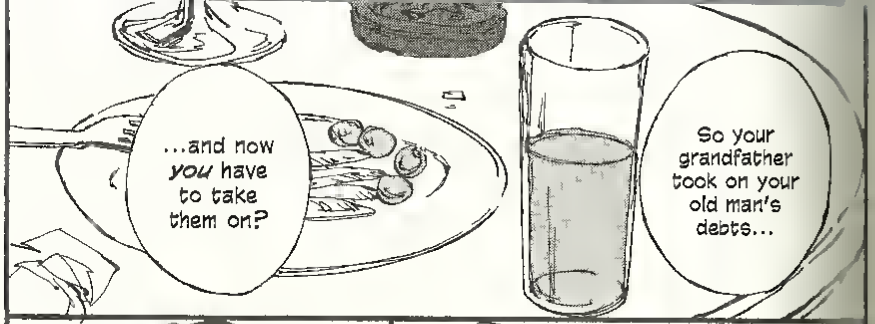
So Rafita Alonso returns to the ring today, eh?
But he's just recovered. I wouldn't expect more than one ear.
You're wrong.
What, Mauro?
He'll get four ears from two bulls.

How is it? I haven't made it in so long.
It's delicious.
I probably should have made it less spicy for you
If living long means giving up good food, I'd rather not.
Like husband, like wife— Dad said the same thing and got cancer.
That dress brings back memories.
I dug it out of the closet.
I wish I could show Pablo that it still fits me.
And you used to say you were embarrassed to wear a bright red dress.


Mauro, what are you doing?
I'm dead.
I told you not to let him play on the table!
Papa! What have you been teaching this boy?!
Is that so? Then maybe I'll stew you and serve you for dinner.
I'm the bull, so I have to die.

I still can't believe it.
Papa never said a word about those debts when he was alive.
It's just Mama and me. An apartment is good enough.
You're going to sell this house, too?
...
Why should we pay back the debts your good-for-nothing father racked up?
He said it's hard work, but you're young, so you'll do fine.
Your uncle says he can get you a job.
About that...

Huh?
Heh. That look on your face just now.
You looked just like Pablo, when he was young.
It looks good on you.
...yet he said this was the best color for me.
Funny man. He couldn't see the color red himself...


...and now *you* have to take them on?
So your grandfather took on your old man's debts...

You didn't call me here to talk about this.
Yeah, I'm overwhelmed by your sympathy.
That's rough.

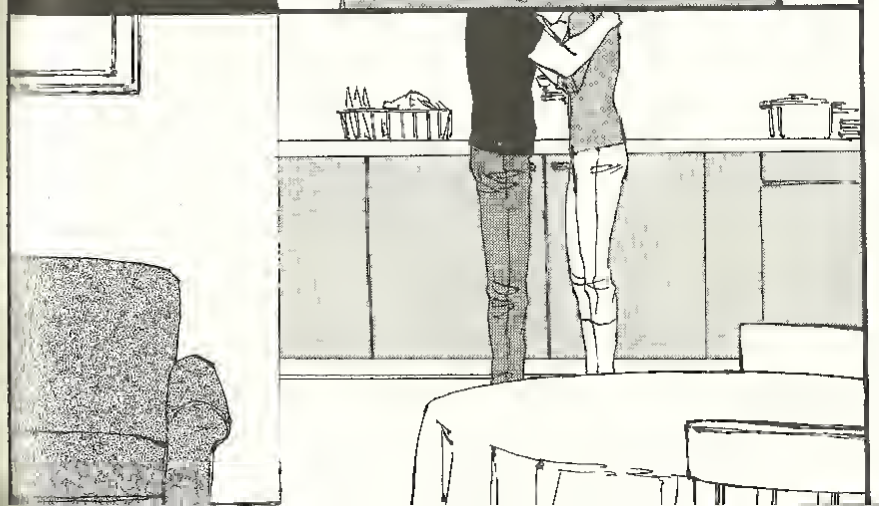
Is that so?
That professor of yours.
I slept with him.

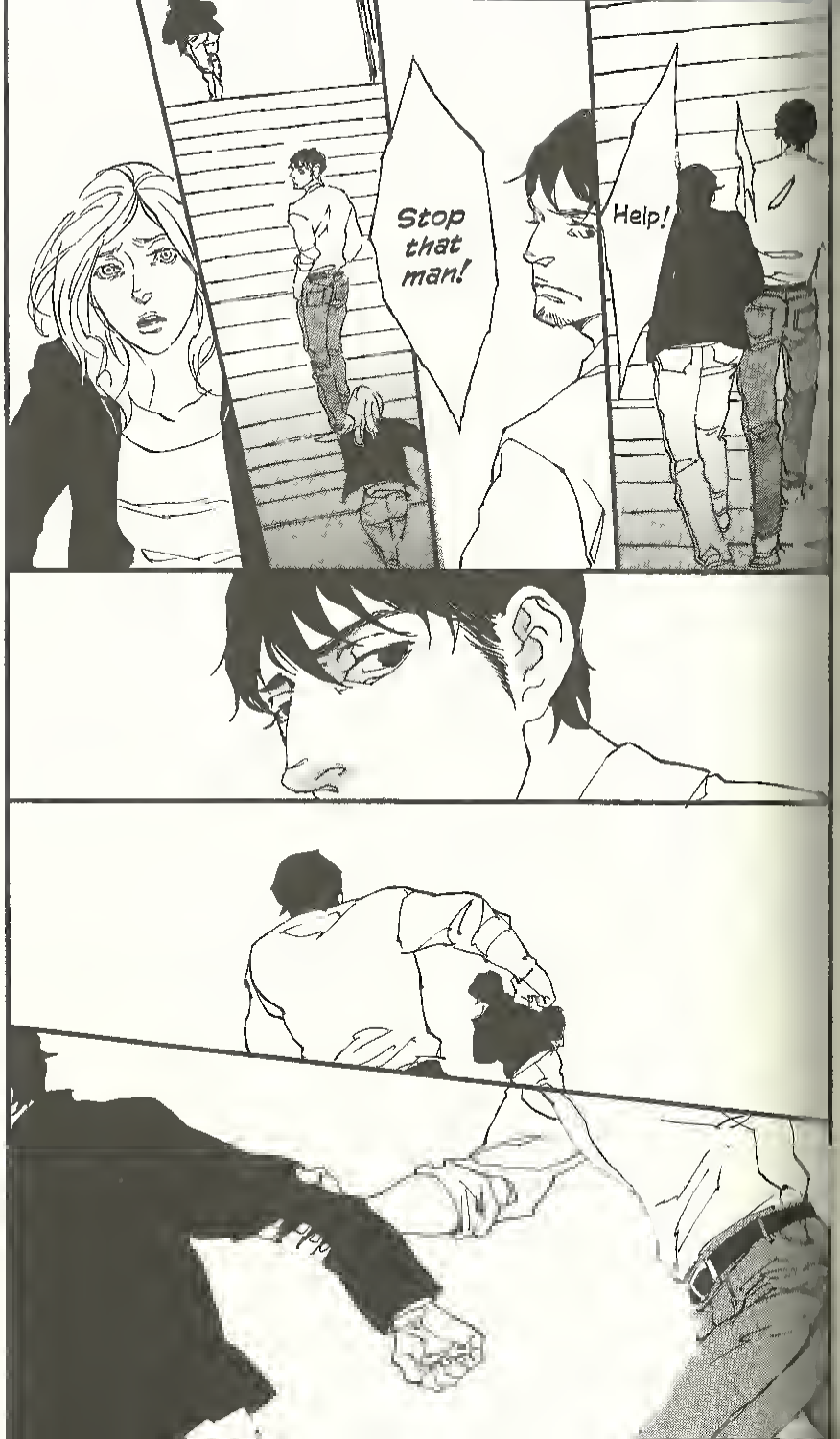
Whaddaya mean, "Is that so"?

She wants to keep you in school.
Mama is saying *she'll* find a job.

I'm just asking you to take some time off from school and earn some money till we get back on our feet.
Don't say it.

Please... Mauro...



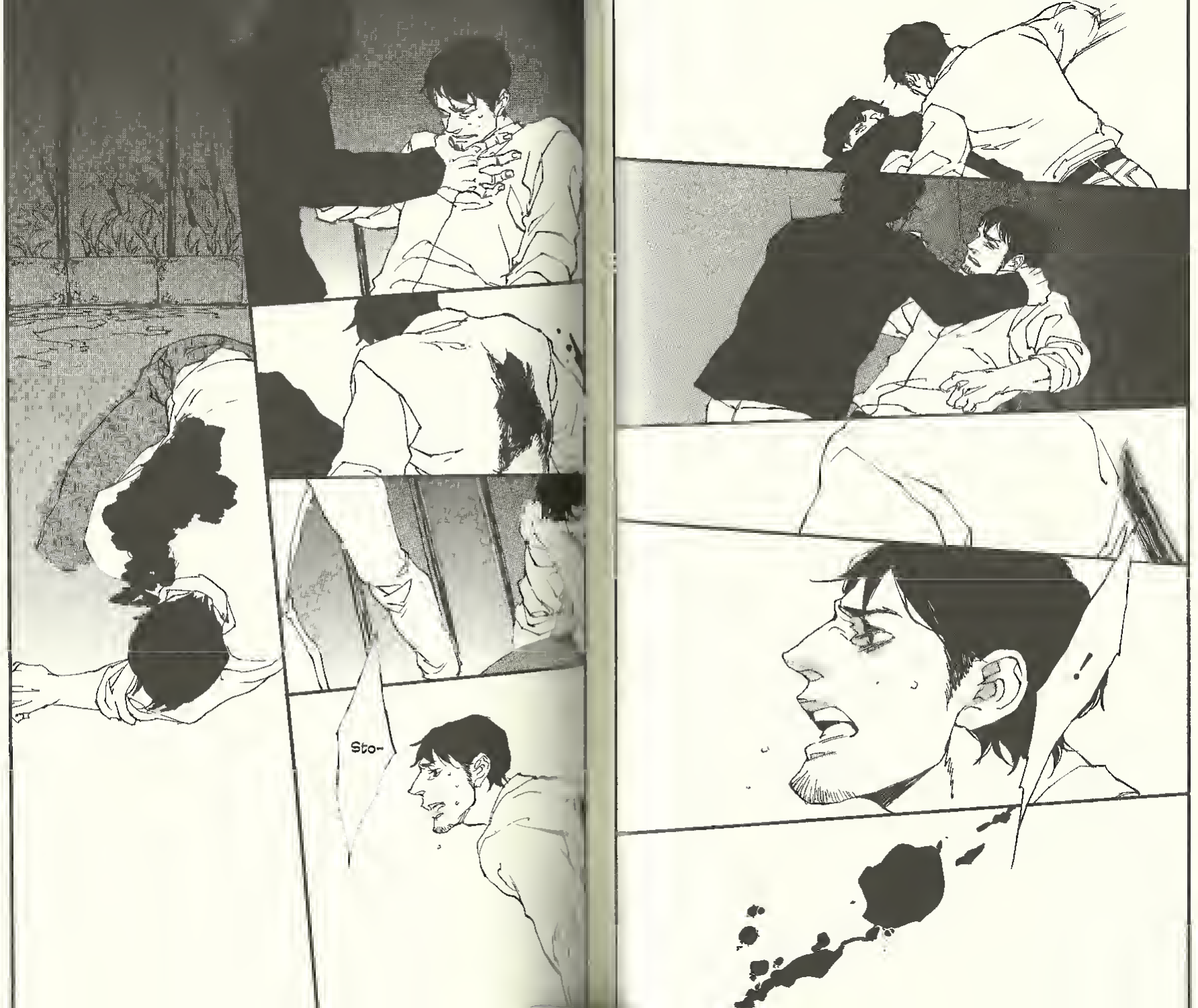

Stop that man!
Help!

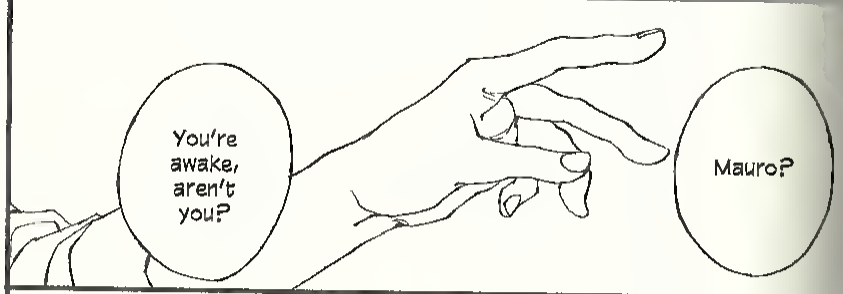
I couldn't care less who you sleep with.
I'm tired.

What do you want me to say?
Should I go into a jealous rage and punch you?

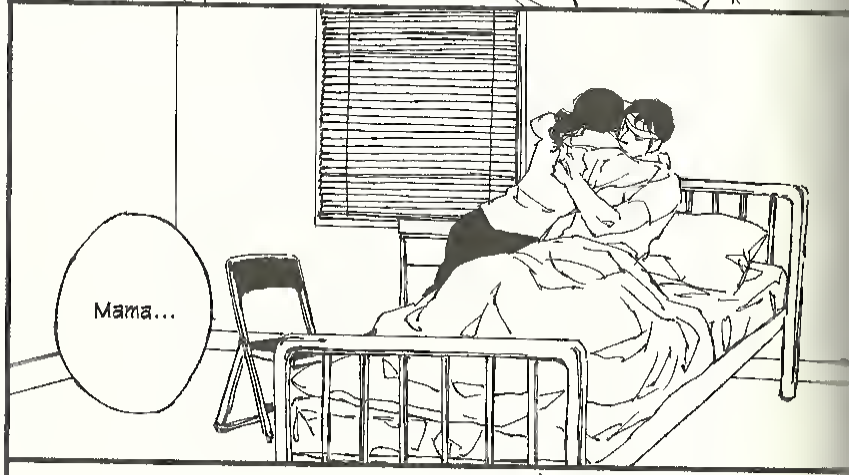
...and I'm tired of trying so damned hard to become a lawyer.
I'm tired of you...

Just don't expect anything from me, all right?

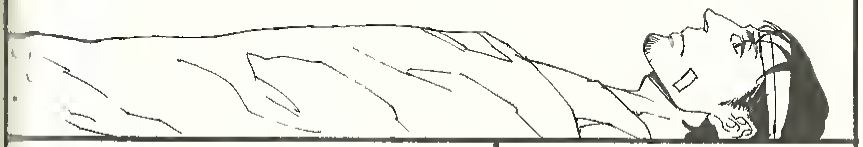

Sto-

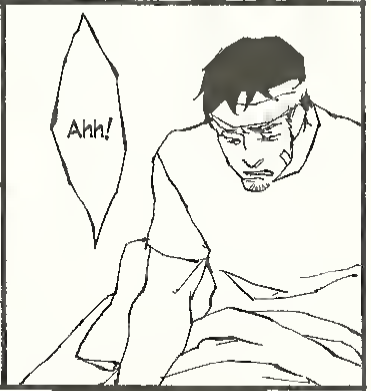

You're awake, aren't you?
Mauro?

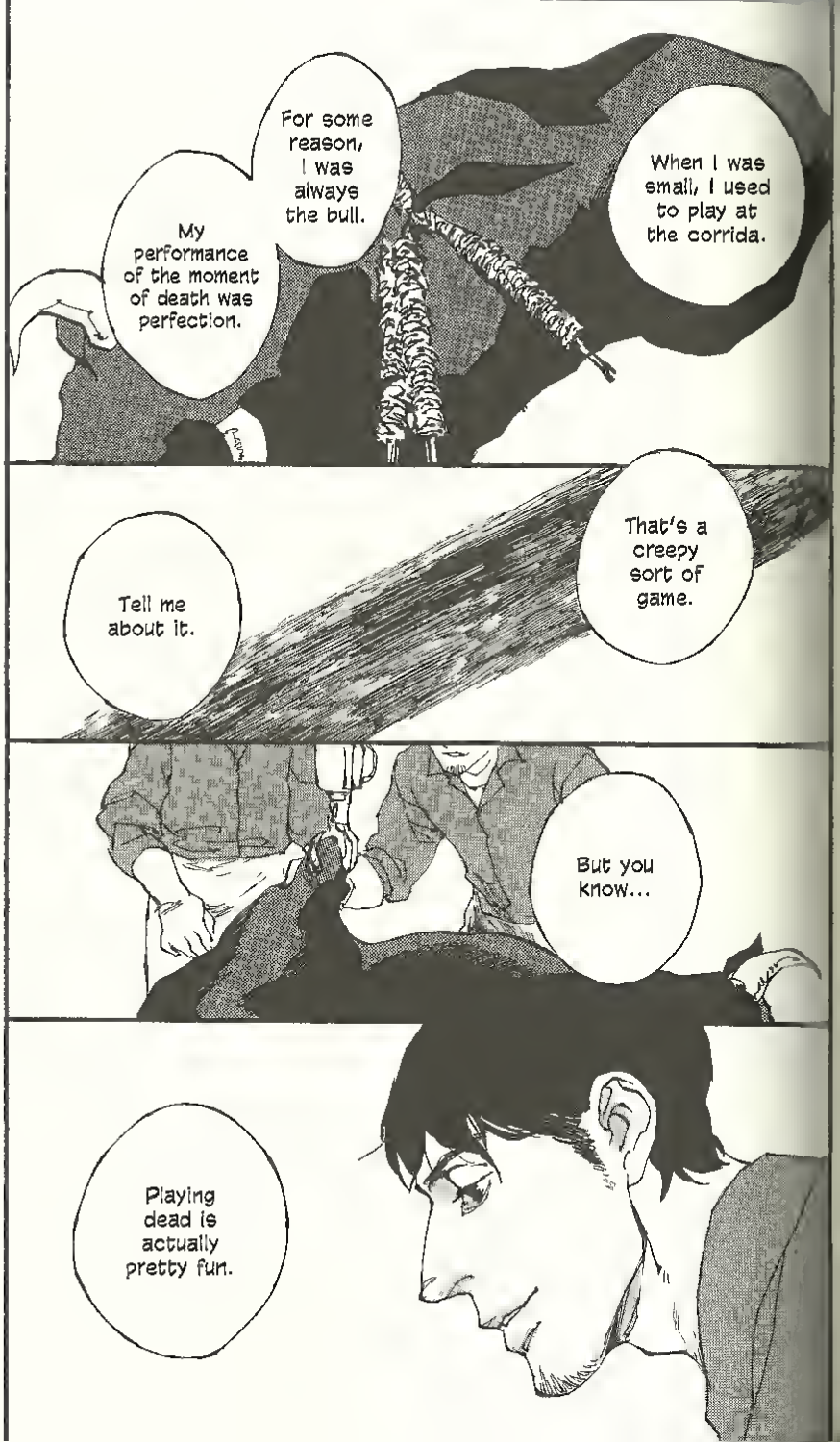
Ever since you were little, you've liked to play dead.


Mama...

...I'll take that job.
Once I'm better...



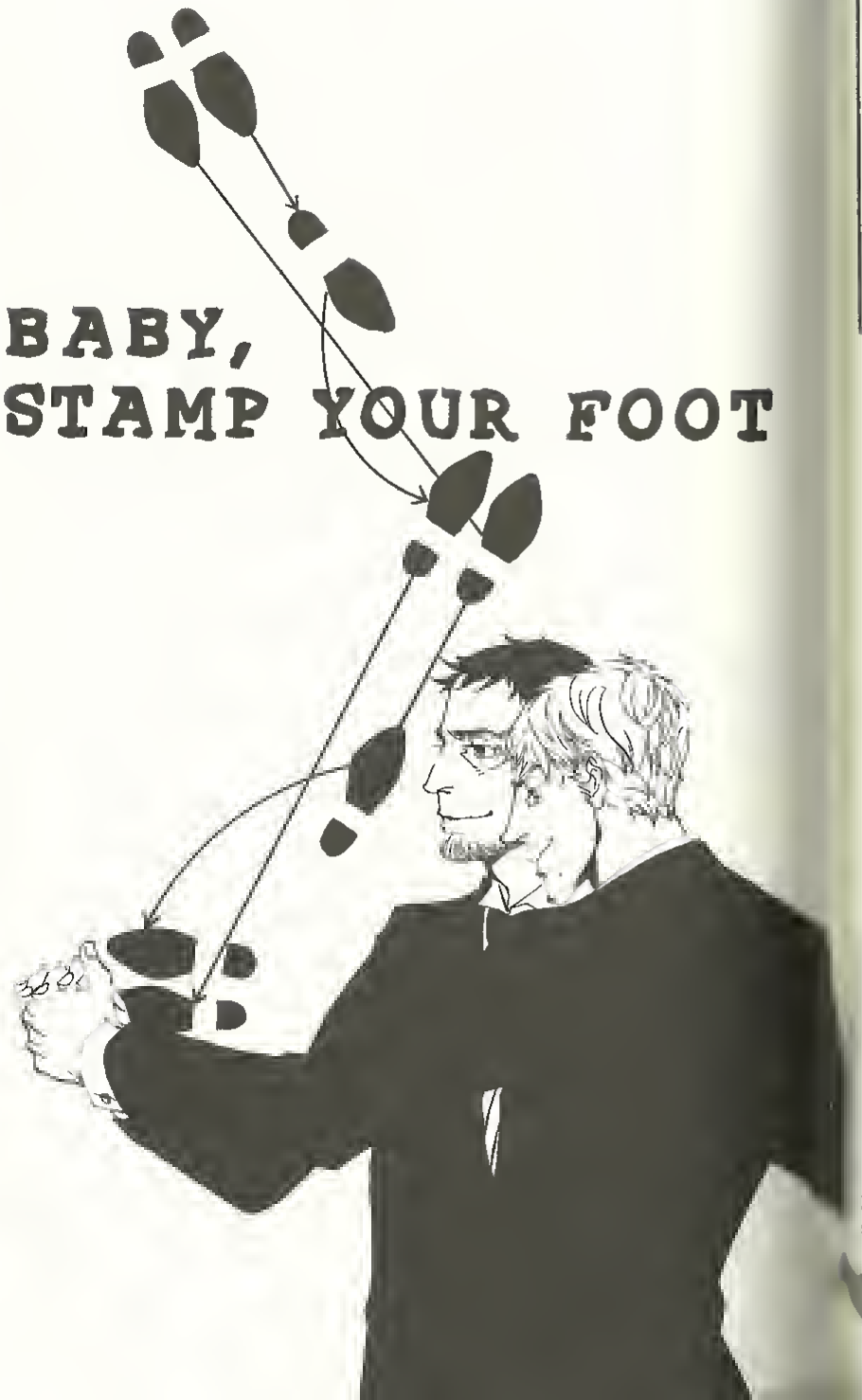

Ahh!


When I was small, I used to play at the corrida.
For some reason, I was always the bull.
My performance of the moment of death was perfection.
That's a creepy sort of game.
Tell me about it.
But you know...
Playing dead is actually pretty fun.

I'm glad to have someone young helping out.
It's hard work, but you'll get used to it in no time.
The smell will bother you at first...
...but in a few days, you won't even notice it.
So you're Pablo's grandson. He and my old man were in the same peña.*
Do you follow the corridas?
My grandfather took me when I was a boy.
While he was in the hospital, I reported the results to him, so I remember most of the results for Las Ventas last year

*Peña: A bullfighting fan club.

# BABY, STAMP YOUR FOOT



You like watching people wait for other people? I didn't know you were a voyeur.
You should try it. Two, three hours fly by just like that.
My landlord was worried about the same thing. That's why he's kicking me out.
Why the hell have you been living in this dump, anyway?
The view.
The view from this window is fantastic.
You know what puzzles me?
What?
Why the floor hasn't collapsed.

Hey, I've been looking for this jacket.
Well, the closet's just as bad.
Dammit.
I told him to keep shoe trees in his shoes.

Is this a first edition of your first novel?
Yeah.
Can I have it? It was published when I was five.
Sure, but that's a defective copy.
the DARK
ROY McGOY
Oh, I'll take care of that. You do the closet.
I want to classify the books and magazines in here.
Classify? This? You're joking, right?

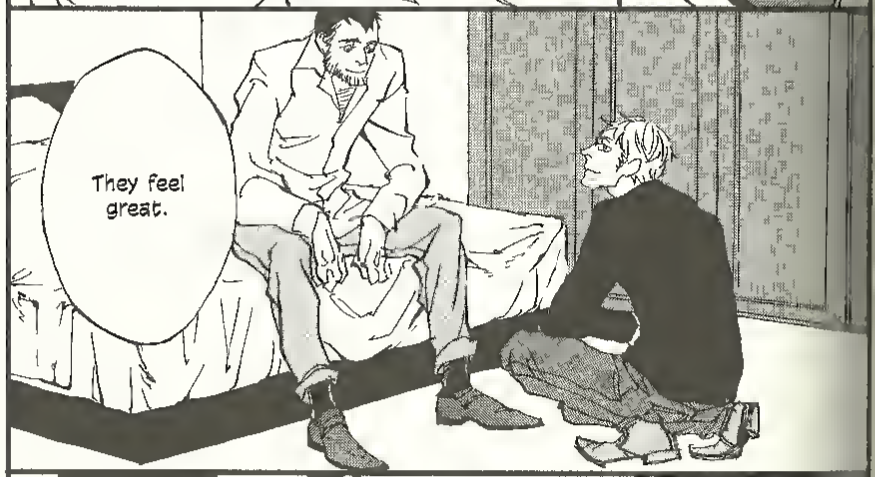
Size six.
Whose shoes are these?
What do you want for dinner?
Chinese.
Look who's talking.
Whoa, you're making things even messier.

What the hell...?
Hey, Roy.
I found a pair of women's shoes...
...in your clos-

Good night.
OK.
Red shoes, huh?

Shanghai Crab.
And some Shaoxing wine
What shoes?
The ones you ordered.
Oh, yeah. About the shoes.
Where to now?
Straight home I've got an early morning delivery.
Can you bring them over?
They'll be done next week. Do you want to come by the shop, or should I bring them over?

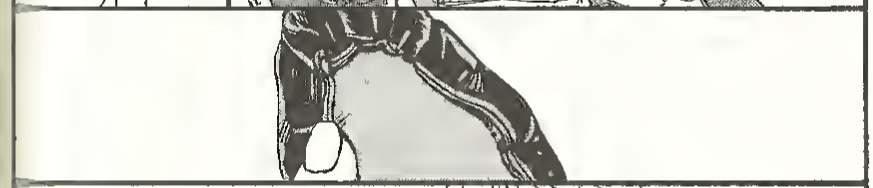
Nice.


They feel great.

Thanks.

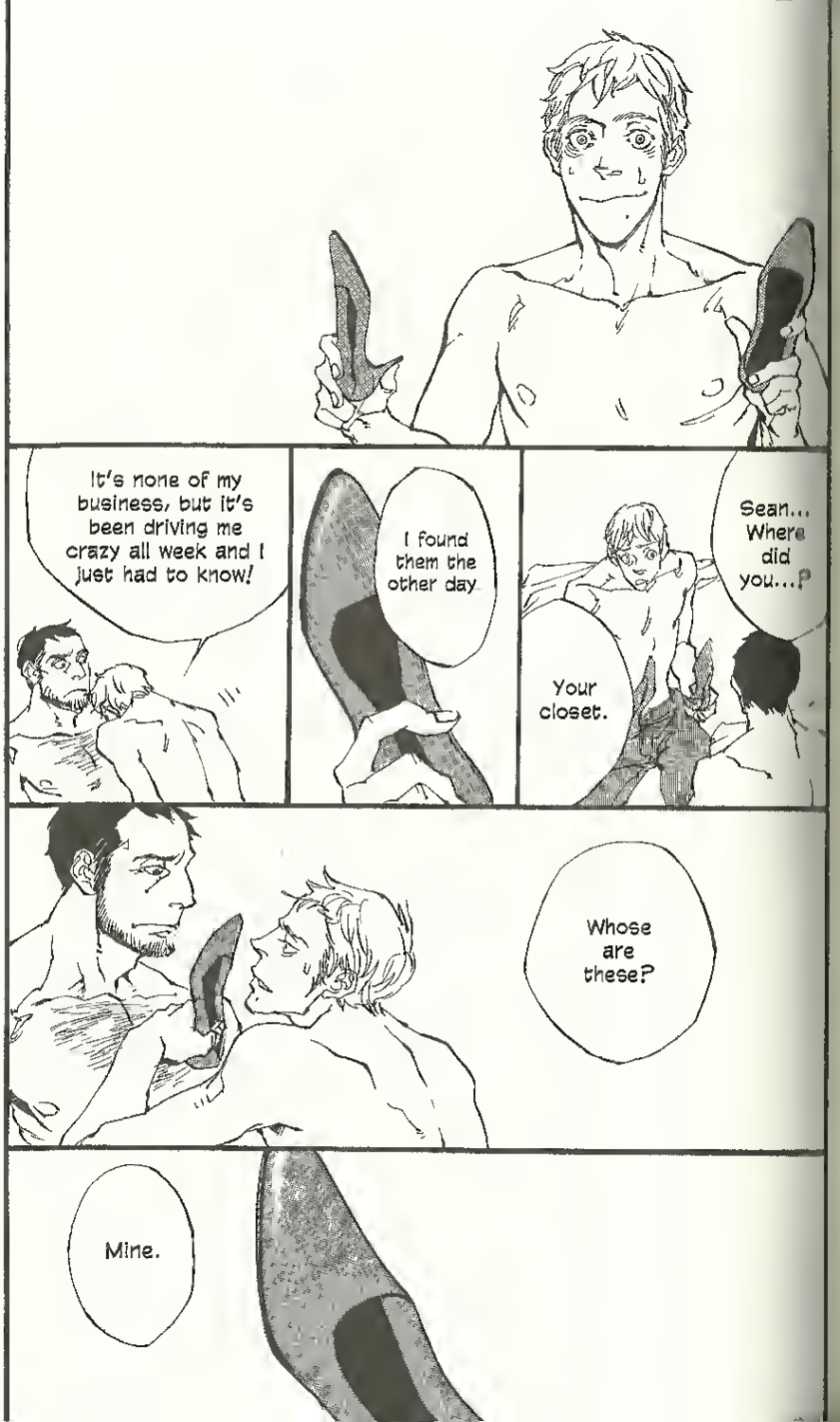
Say...

I'll take a look.
The sixties, maybe?
From when?
Have you got a catalog of women's shoes?

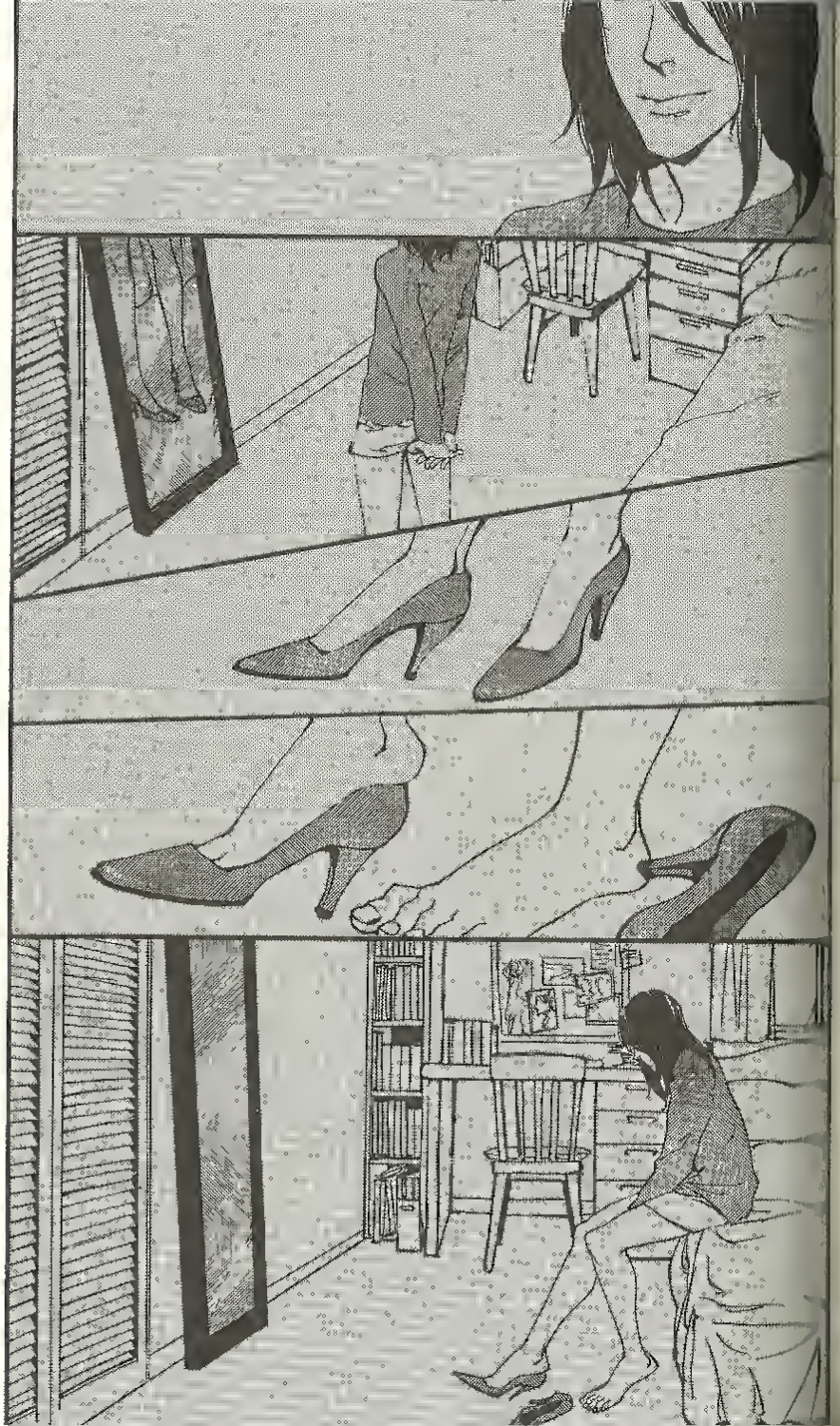


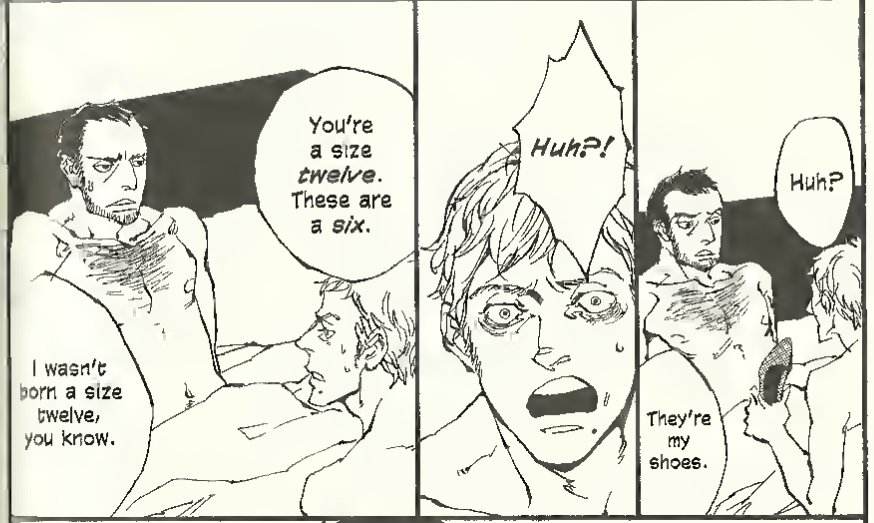
Whose?
Red shoes...
I'll take a cup.
I can't concentrate. I'm gonna make some coffee

I read your new novel.
You make me sound like some kind of pervert.
A guy who can't get it up unless his partner's wearing shoes he made himself?
You deny it?
You wound me. Is that how you see me?


It's none of my business, but it's been driving me crazy all week and I just had to know!
I found them the other day
Sean... Where did you...?
Your closet.
Whose are these?
Mine.

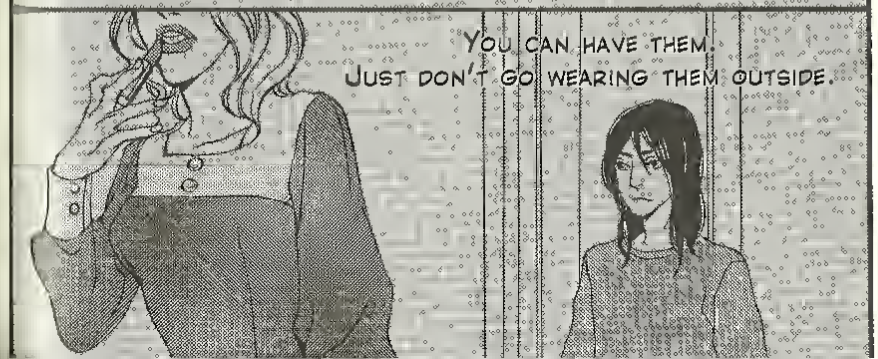
Wha-?
What are you doing?!

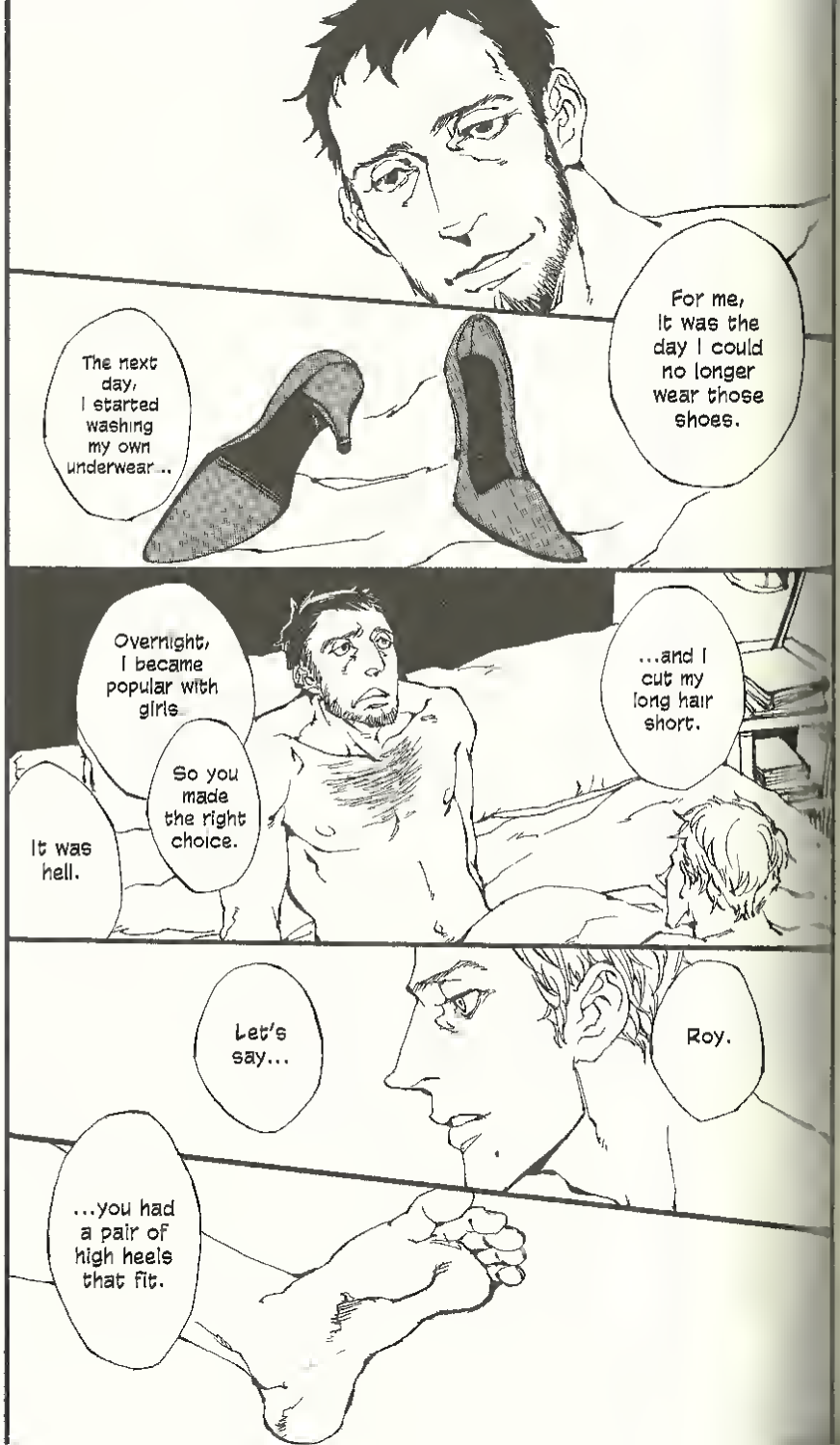



You're a size *twelve*. These are a *six*.
I wasn't born a size twelve, you know.
*Huh?!*
Huh?
They're my shoes.

My mother gave them to me.
They're *my* shoes.

ROY, DID YOU TAKE MY SHOES AGAIN? YOU REALLY LIKE THOSE, DON'T YOU?

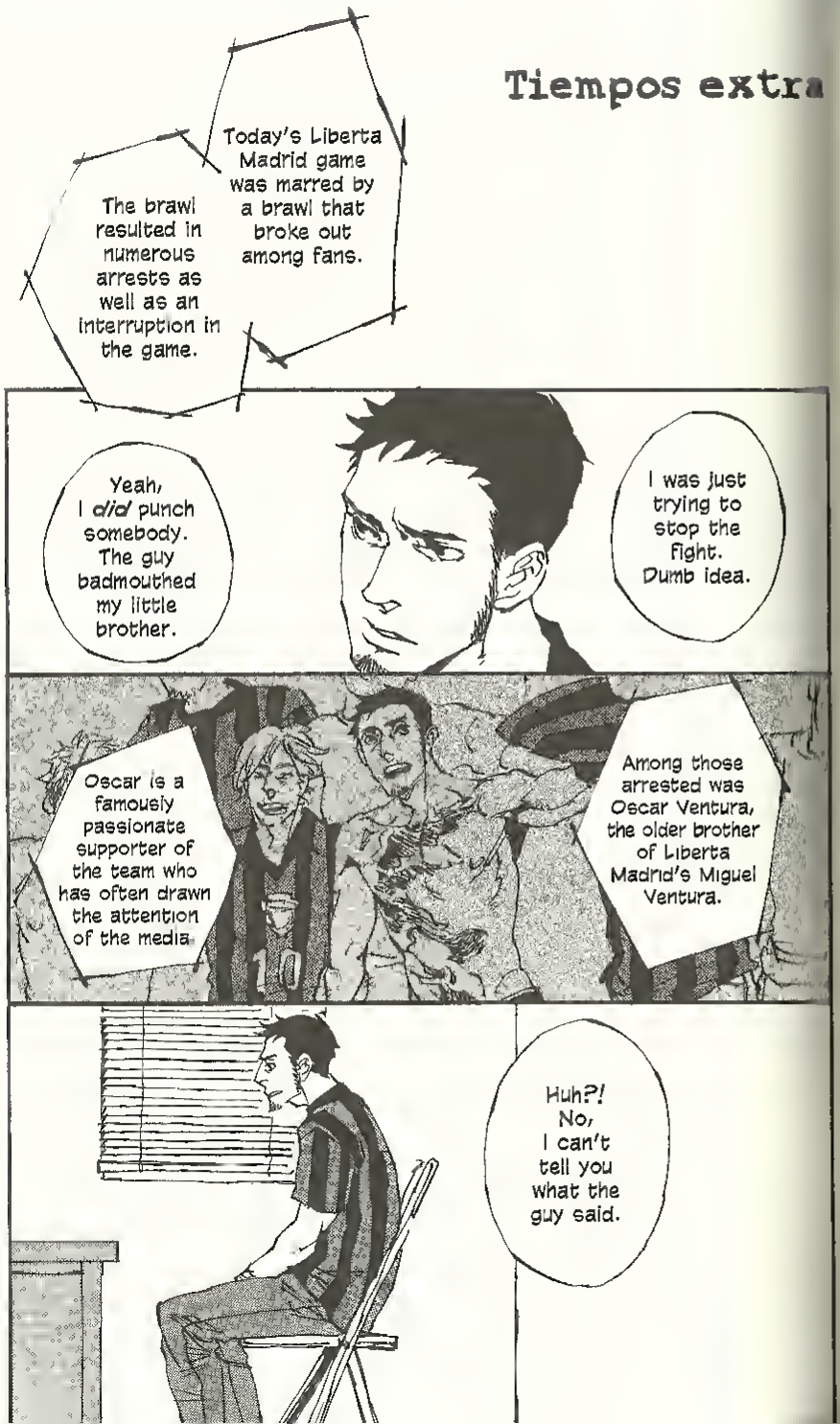

YOU CAN HAVE THEM. JUST DON'T GO WEARING THEM OUTSIDE.

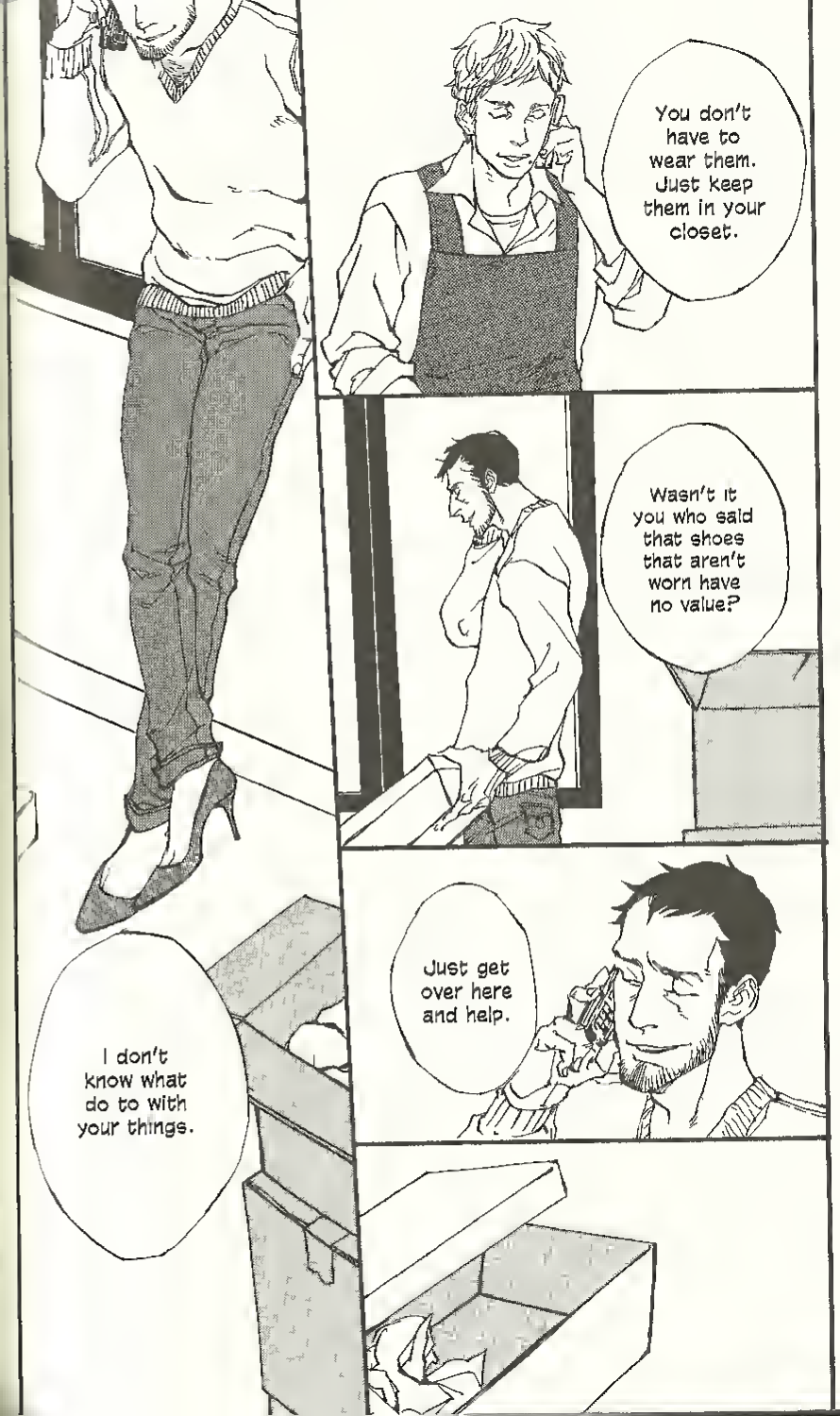

For me, it was the day I could no longer wear those shoes.
The next day, I started washing my own underwear...
...and I cut my long hair short.
Overnight, I became popular with girls.
So you made the right choice.
It was hell.
Roy.
Let's say...
...you had a pair of high heels that fit.

MOM, THEY DON'T FIT ANYMORE.
ROY...
I DON'T HAVE ANY SHOES THAT ARE BIGGER
Do you remember the day you became an adult?
No, that's not what I mean.
You mean the first time I had sex?

Hmm?
A box with a red mark? What, is it your stuff?
This room has a good view, too.
Yeah, the movers just left.
What's...?
HA HA HA HA HA!

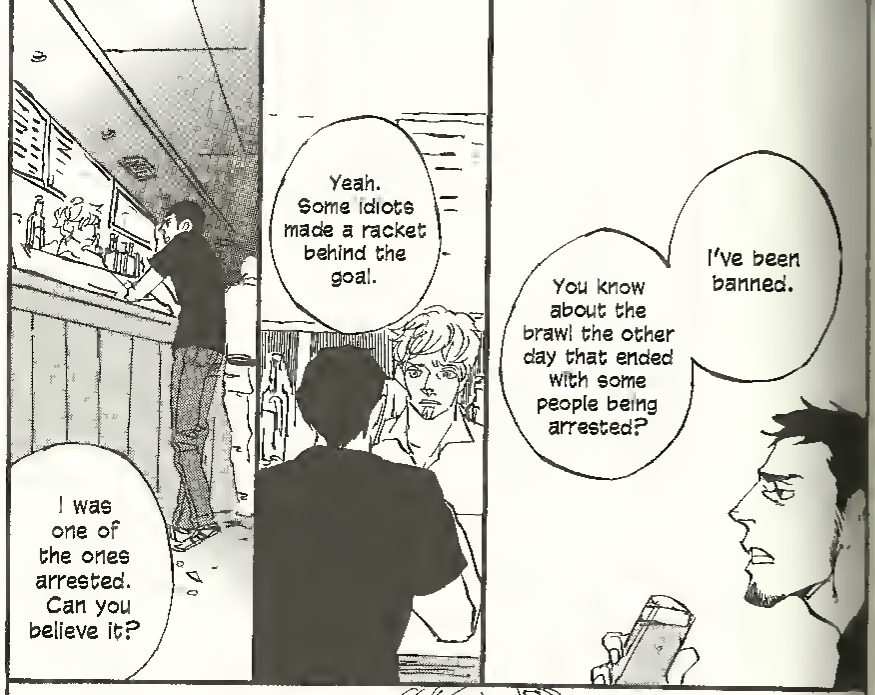
Would you wear them?
Don't even think about it.
I'd love to see you in red high heels.
You heard me, Sean. Don't even think about it.


Today's Liberta Madrid game was marred by a brawl that broke out among fans.
The brawl resulted in numerous arrests as well as an interruption in the game.
Yeah, I *did* punch somebody. The guy badmouthed my little brother.
I was just trying to stop the fight. Dumb idea.
Oscar is a famously passionate supporter of the team who has often drawn the attention of the media.
Among those arrested was Oscar Ventura, the older brother of Liberta Madrid's Miguel Ventura.
Huh?! No, I can't tell you what the guy said.


You don't have to wear them. Just keep them in your closet.
Wasn't it you who said that shoes that aren't worn have no value?
Just get over here and help.
I don't know what do to with your things.

# Tiempos extra

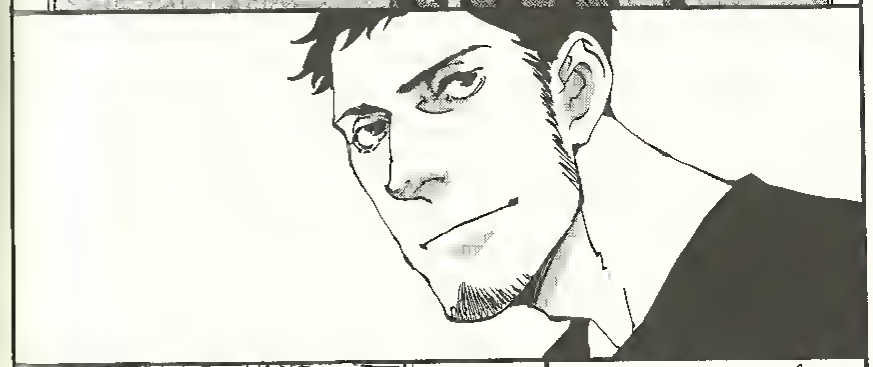
'Cause my mother taught me never to use foul language, that's why.
In other news...
Miguel Ventura has not commented on the incident.


I was one of the ones arrested. Can you believe it?
Yeah. Some idiots made a racket behind the goal.
You know about the brawl the other day that ended with some people being arrested?
I've been banned.

You're an idiot, too, aren't you?
Almost forgot.

Two of 'em! Carrying huge clubs! Well, I did punch the younger guard.
I just got caught in the middle! Then security shows up and grabs me.

Thirteen minutes into the second half, and Liberta Madrid has turned this game around!
GOAL! Miguel Ventura's second goal of the game!



Why aren't you at the game?
Hm? Wait a second.

That guard looked just like him.
Tall, kind of gentle looking...

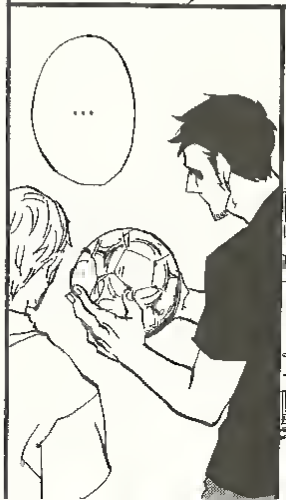
Oh... You think so?
...
Don't you think punching the guard was going a little too far?
Well, those bastards deserved to get punched!
They stand there like statues even when there's a goal! They aren't human!
If that's an insult, I'm going to punch you.
Come to think of it, the guy I punched was a real looker. Just your type.
Hey, that guy over there.
Ha ha ha! Easy, now!

Huh?

I'm not asking you to.
I'm not going to apologize.

I didn't know you were Miguel Ventura's brother.

I'll help you solve things peacefully.
If you two want to get to know each other better, that's great, but if you wanna fight, take it outside.


...

Here.

Hold on.

Shit. It's *him*.
What?

He's coming this way.

Beer.

You were on the news.

It was me who taught Miguel football.
I'm still better than him at lifting.
Wow.

Once we boasted the Armada Invencible.*
Why the hell can't Spain win the Cup?

Now that's stupid.
BAR LIBERT
Heh heh.
I couldn't bear seeing our team play a losing match, so I didn't watch it on TV.

What does he think caused the brawl in the first place?
That dummy. Soccer? Peaceful?

Yo!
When Italy won?
Yeah.
Did you see the World Cup last year?

I cried as I watched my little brother sing the national anthem.
I quit my job and went to Germany to watch.

Why are you just standing there?
Here.
OW!
Wow. You *suck*.

Yo!
Hey.
GOAL!
Yo!
Yo!

Now we're even.

You should see yourself.
That bruise is awful.
You gave it to me!
What, you're still...?
Pretty good punch, huh?
Come to think of it, I haven't gotten even yet.

Where's the guard?
Here. Thanks.
Went home.
What? You're spacing out, man.
Hey...
Huh?!
What's it like... on your side of the street?
You know, I think I *will* punch you.

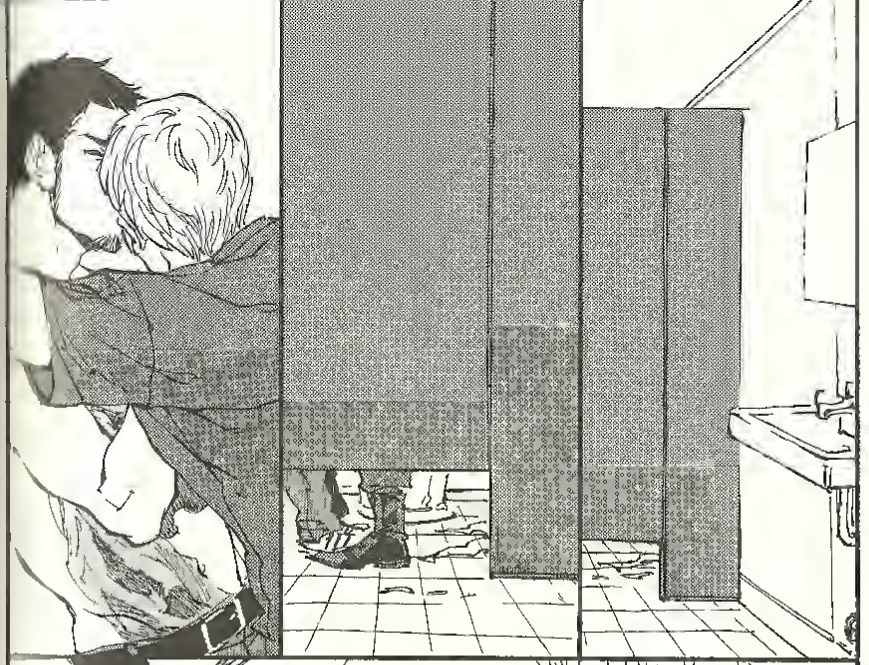
Hey.
Hi.
?
Heh heh.
...but I'm in a good mood today.
*Now* we're even. I was gonna headbutt you...
Hey, what the-?
Huh?!

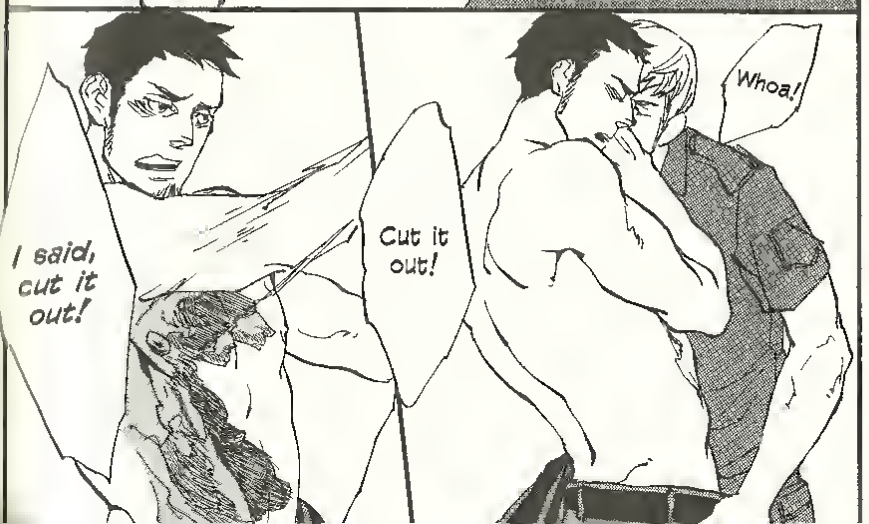
BEEE-
BEEEEP

That's not what I meant when I told you I was in a good mood, *idiot!*

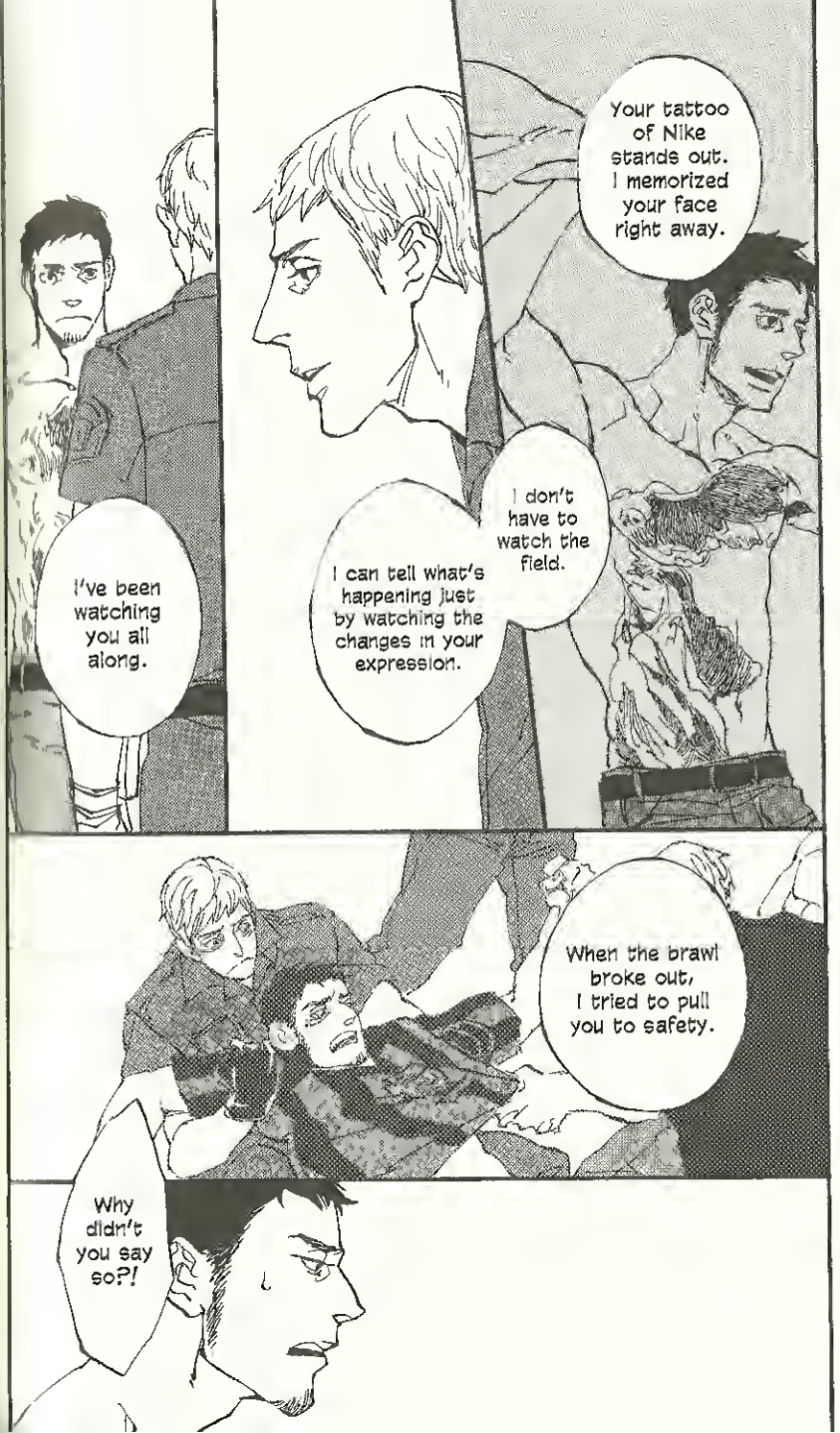
Forget it. Did you see Miguel's goal?
No.
Sorry.

Huh?!
Man, your job is the *worst*. You're here in the stadium, but you can't watch the game.
I watch you instead.



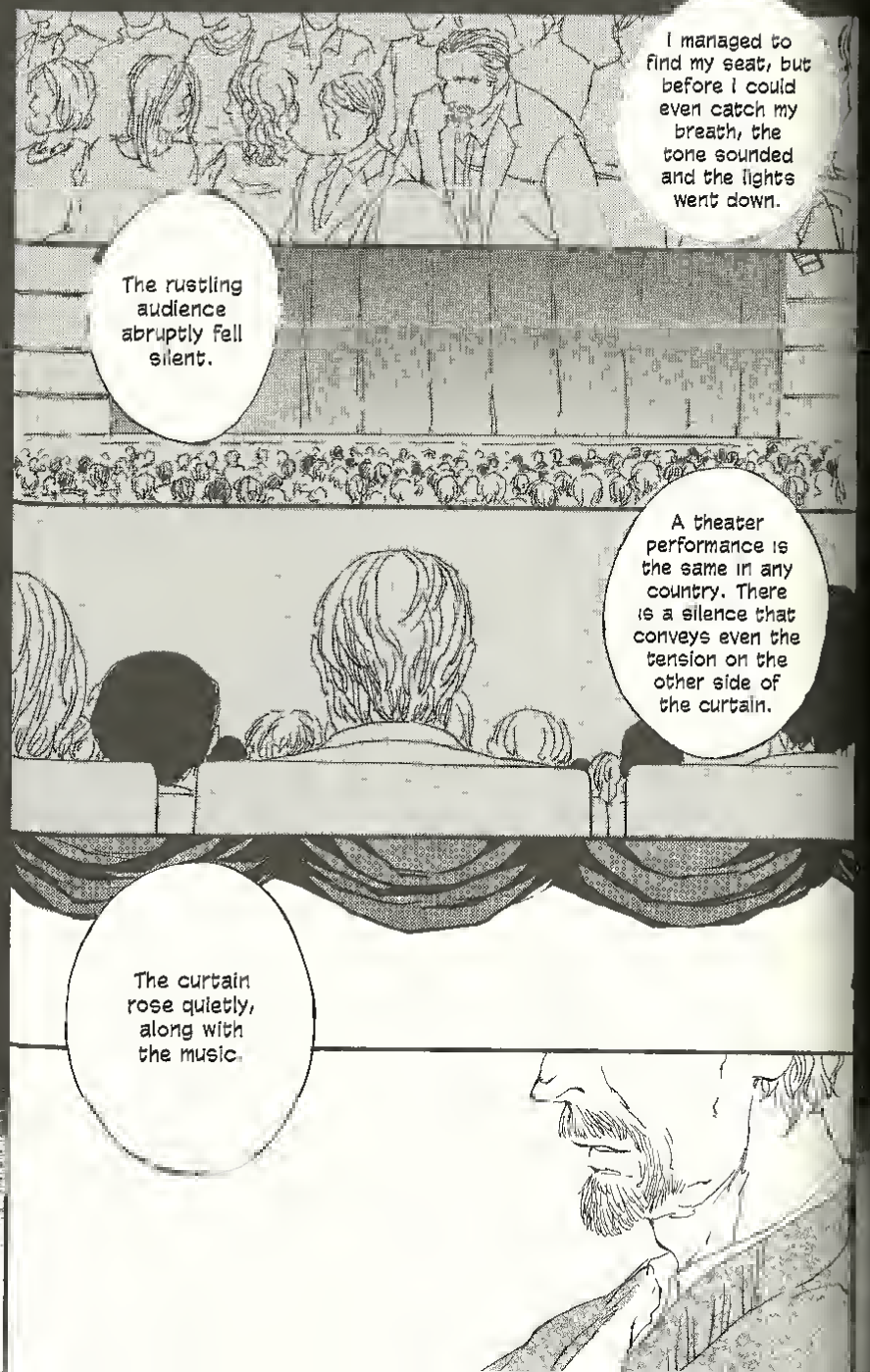

*I said, cut it out!*
Cut it out!
Whoa!

Sorry I slugged you.
Whoa. No more "getting even." I'm not... *like* you.
Oh, but you could be.
The hell I could.


Your tattoo of Nike stands out. I memorized your face right away.
I don't have to watch the field.
I can tell what's happening just by watching the changes in your expression.
I've been watching you all along.
When the brawl broke out, I tried to pull you to safety.
Why didn't you say so?!

lumiere

You should quit your security job.
Run faster!
Shit! The second half!
The thing to wear to the stadium is a game jersey.
I'll get you one signed by Miguel Ventura.
VENTURA
7


I managed to find my seat, but before I could even catch my breath, the tone sounded and the lights went down.
The rustling audience abruptly fell silent.
A theater performance is the same in any country. There is a silence that conveys even the tension on the other side of the curtain.
The curtain rose quietly, along with the music.

I asked the taxi driver how much longer. He responded with a shrug and a frown.
With no other choice, I handed the driver the fare on the meter and a bit more...
...exited the cab, and ran, dodging the cars and pedestrians.
The heat of the theater, minutes before curtain time, belied the winter chill outside. The faces in the audience seemed to beam with anticipation.

There's no more pleasurable moment in the world.
I love the moment of silence before the curtain rises, more than anything else.

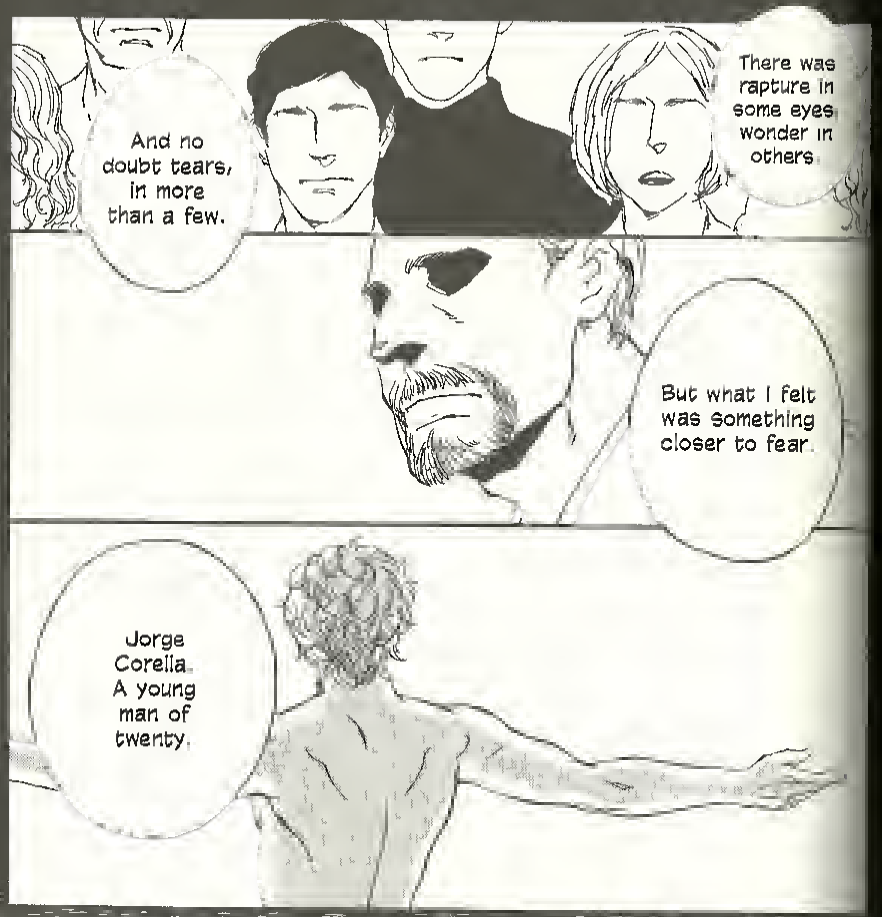
But it *is* nice having someone to listen.
No, no. Just talking to myself.
Should I type that, too?

...appeared on the stage, riding the rising music.
He...

Not too fast.
Are you all right? Here.
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH
COUGH

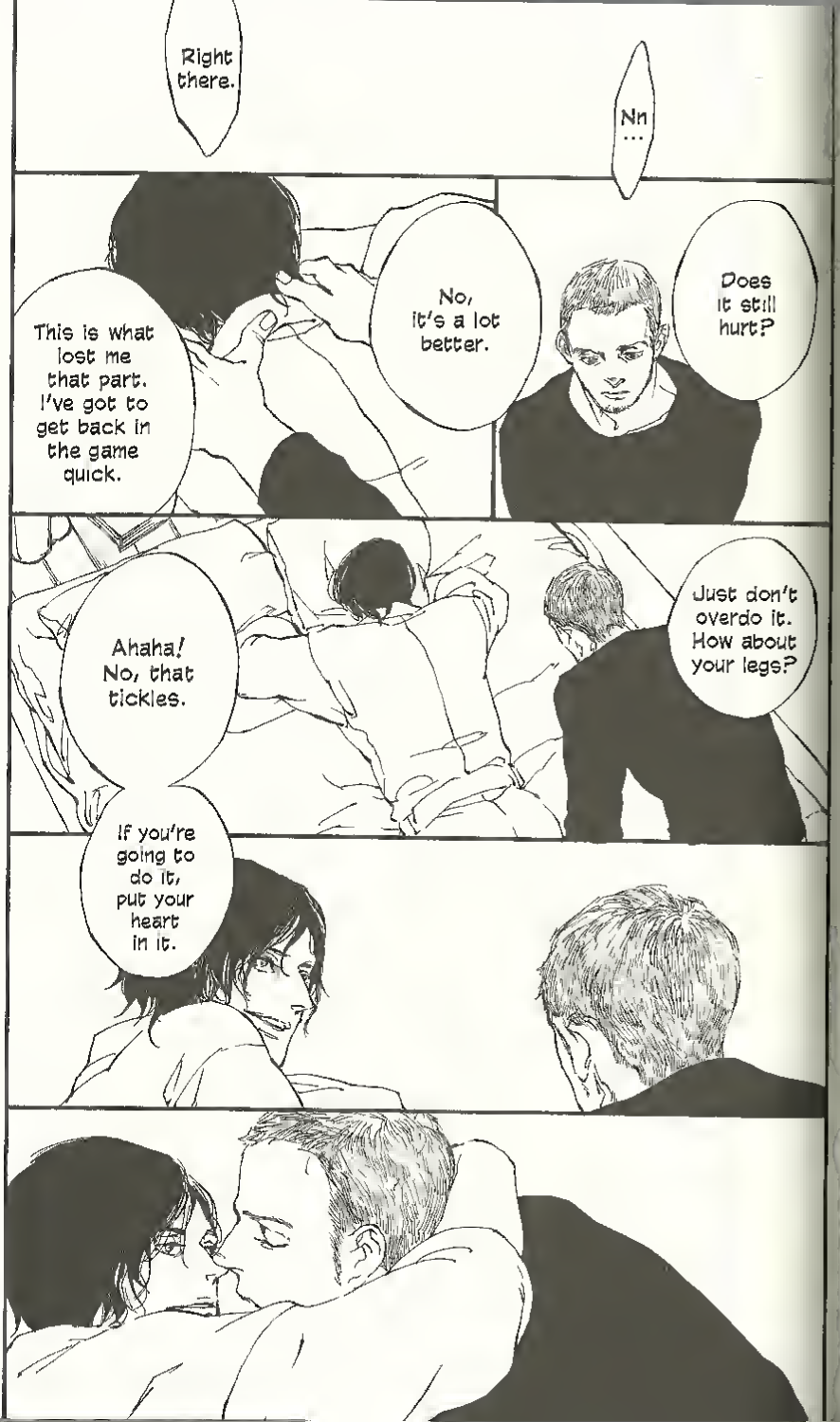
Shall we continue?
Pardon me.

Let me go on. The words are flowing today.
You shouldn't strain yourself. We can continue tomorrow.

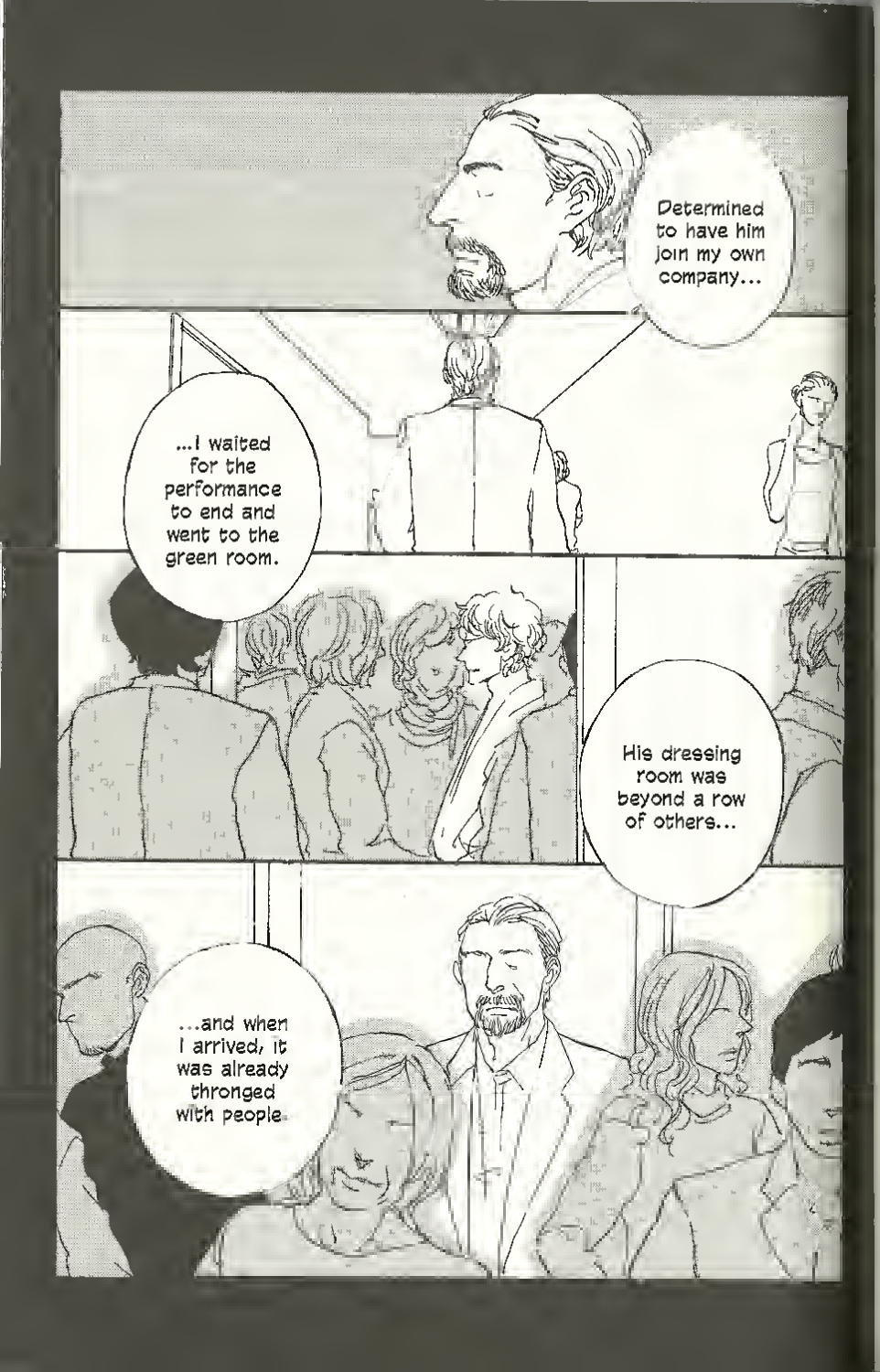

There was rapture in some eyes, wonder in others.
And no doubt tears, in more than a few.
But what I felt was something closer to fear.
Jorge Corella. A young man of twenty.

Dictation?

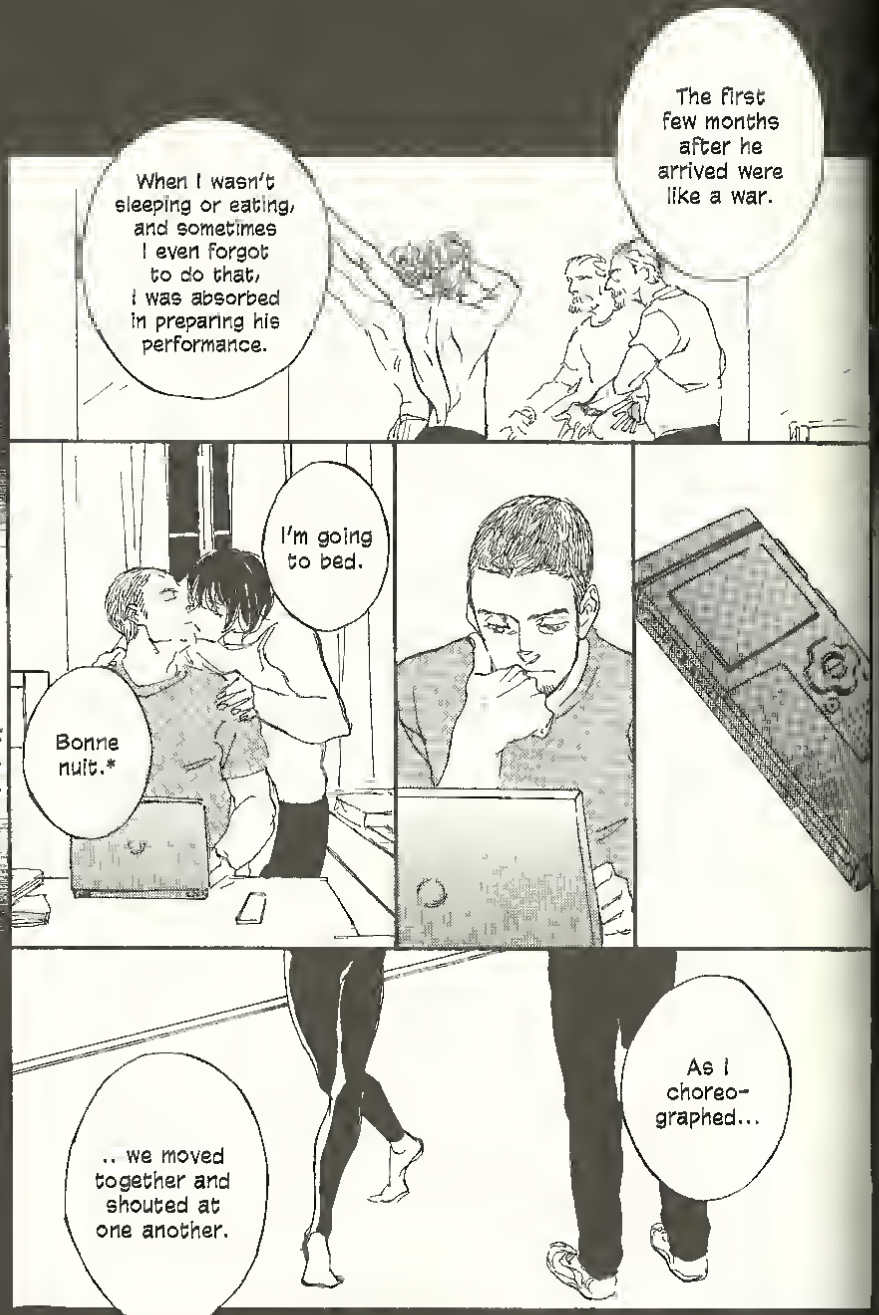
He leaped high and lightly...
...his body like a bow.
His landings were virtually silent.
The audience was awed, their eyes fixed on him as if they had forgotten how to blink.


Right there.
Nn...
Does it still hurt?
No, it's a lot better.
This is what lost me that part. I've got to get back in the game quick.
Just don't overdo it. How about your legs?
Ahaha! No, that tickles.
If you're going to do it, put your heart in it.

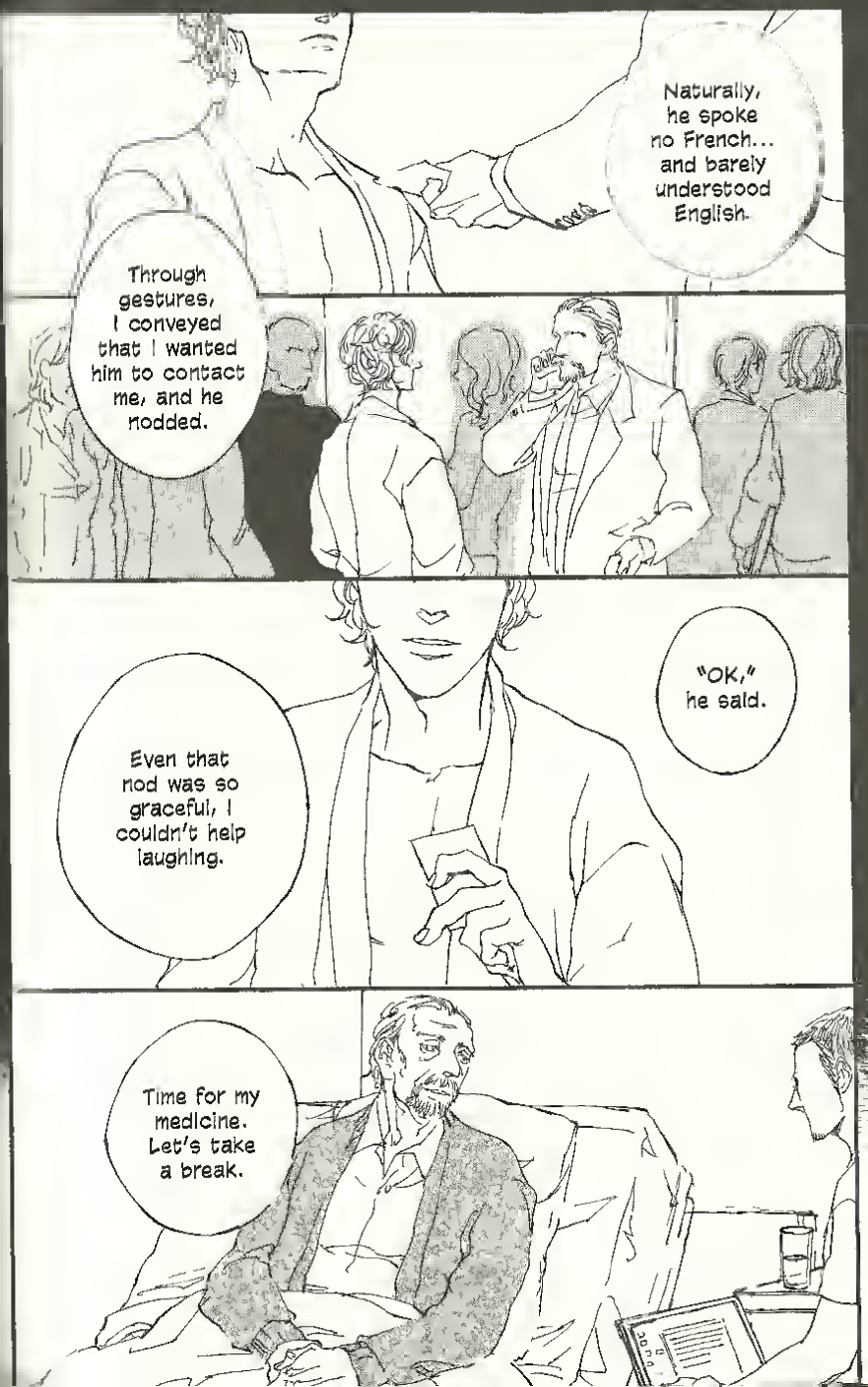
I can't make a living writing fiction, so I was planning to look for a job anyway.
I also help take care of him.
Yeah. For an old man who's mostly bed-ridden.
Where on earth did you find a job like that?
A friend introduced me.
It's fun.
You're a strange bird.
How 'bout a massage?


Determined to have him join my own company...
...I waited for the performance to end and went to the green room.
His dressing room was beyond a row of others...
...and when I arrived, it was already thronged with people.

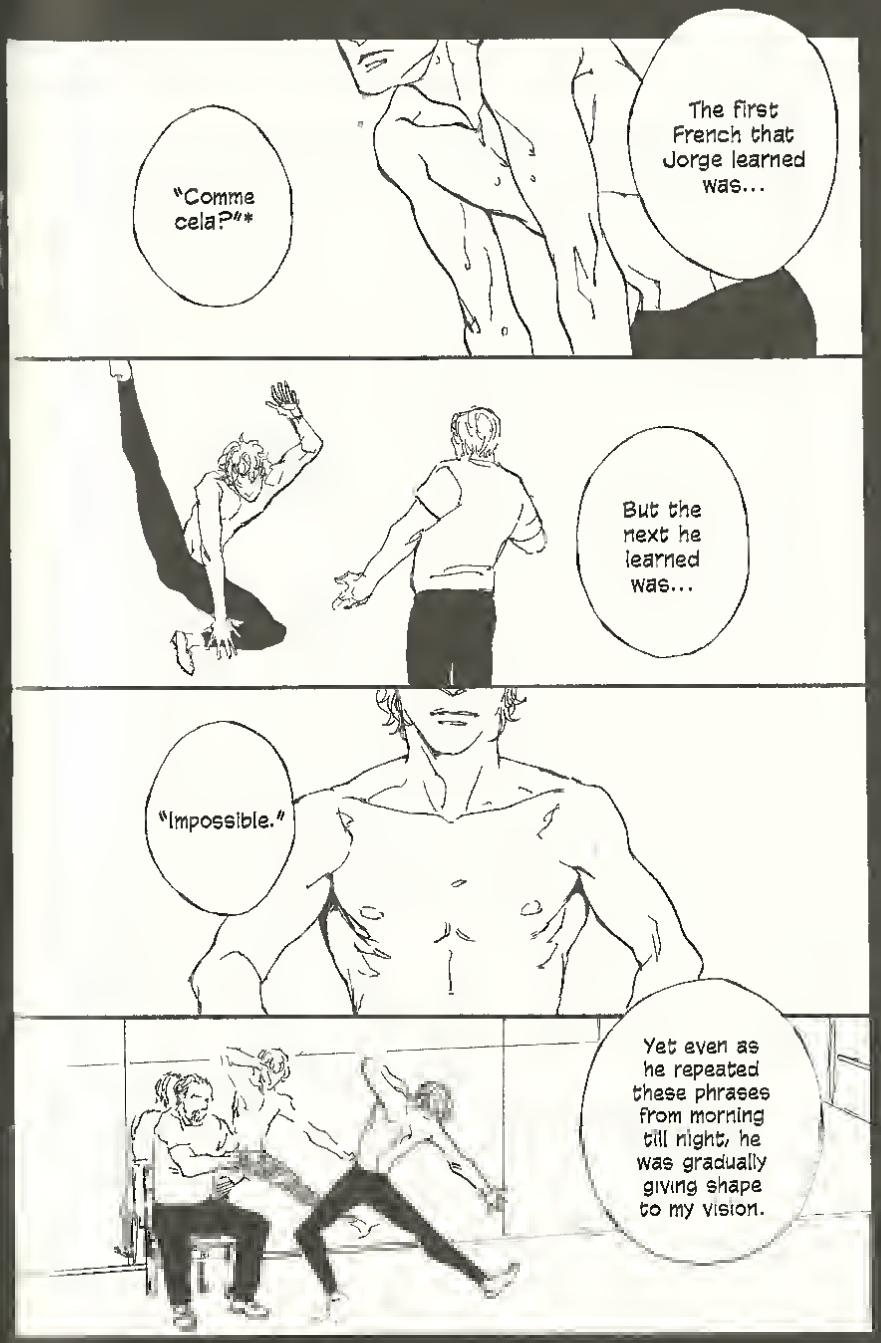
A choreographer.
As in ballet?
Yeah. That's why it's fun.
The old man's novel.
Of what?
Who's the protagonist?
That's not true.
But you're not interested.
Since you rarely talk to me about ballet.
Who was it who was cracking jokes about men in tights?
Idiot.
Oh, *you* look quite sexy in tights.

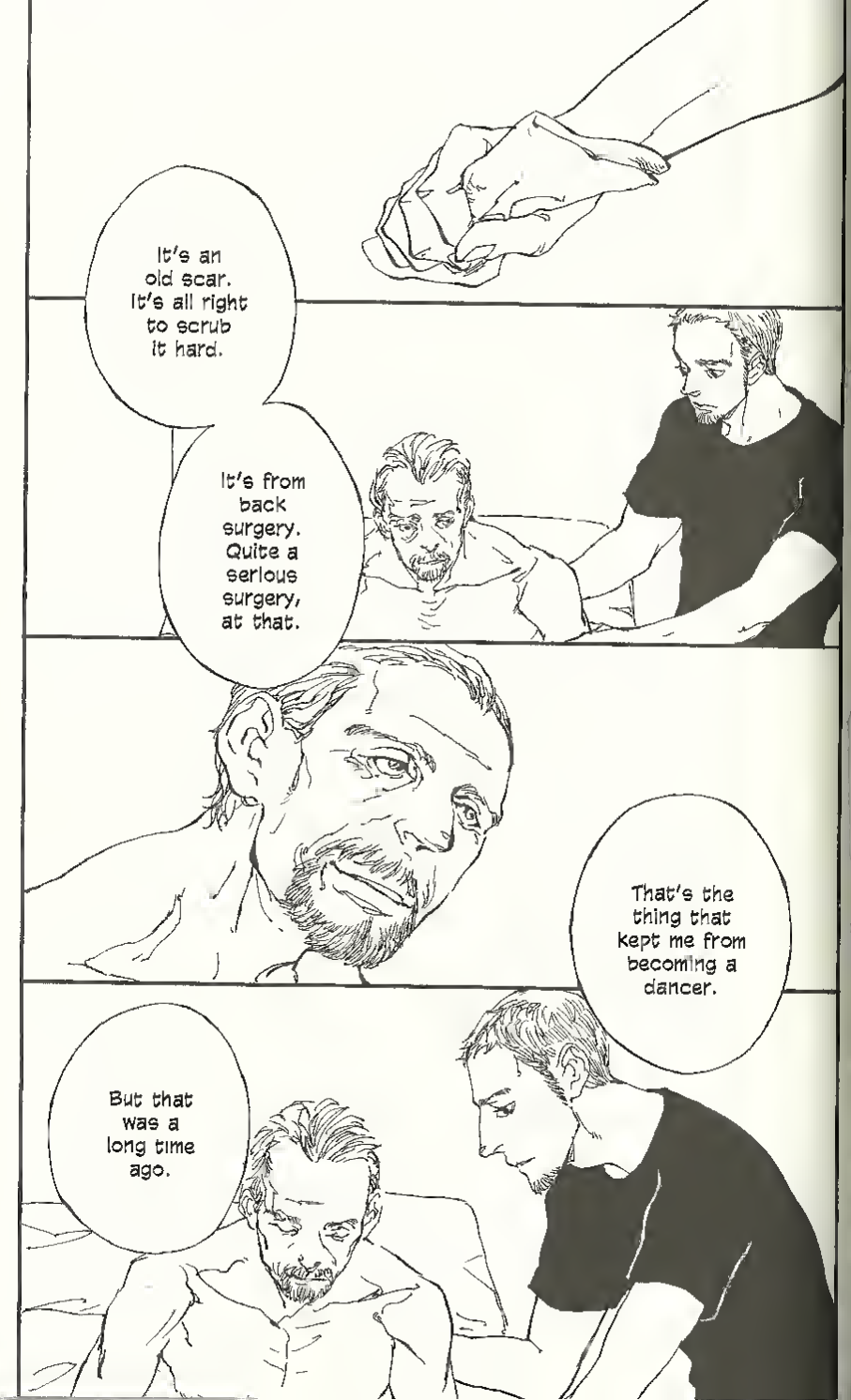

The first few months after he arrived were like a war.
When I wasn't sleeping or eating, and sometimes I even forgot to do that, I was absorbed in preparing his performance.
I'm going to bed.
Bonne nuit.*
As I choreo-graphed...
.. we moved together and shouted at one another.

*Good night.


Naturally, he spoke no French... and barely understood English.
Through gestures, I conveyed that I wanted him to contact me, and he nodded.
"OK," he said.
Even that nod was so graceful, I couldn't help laughing.
Time for my medicine. Let's take a break.

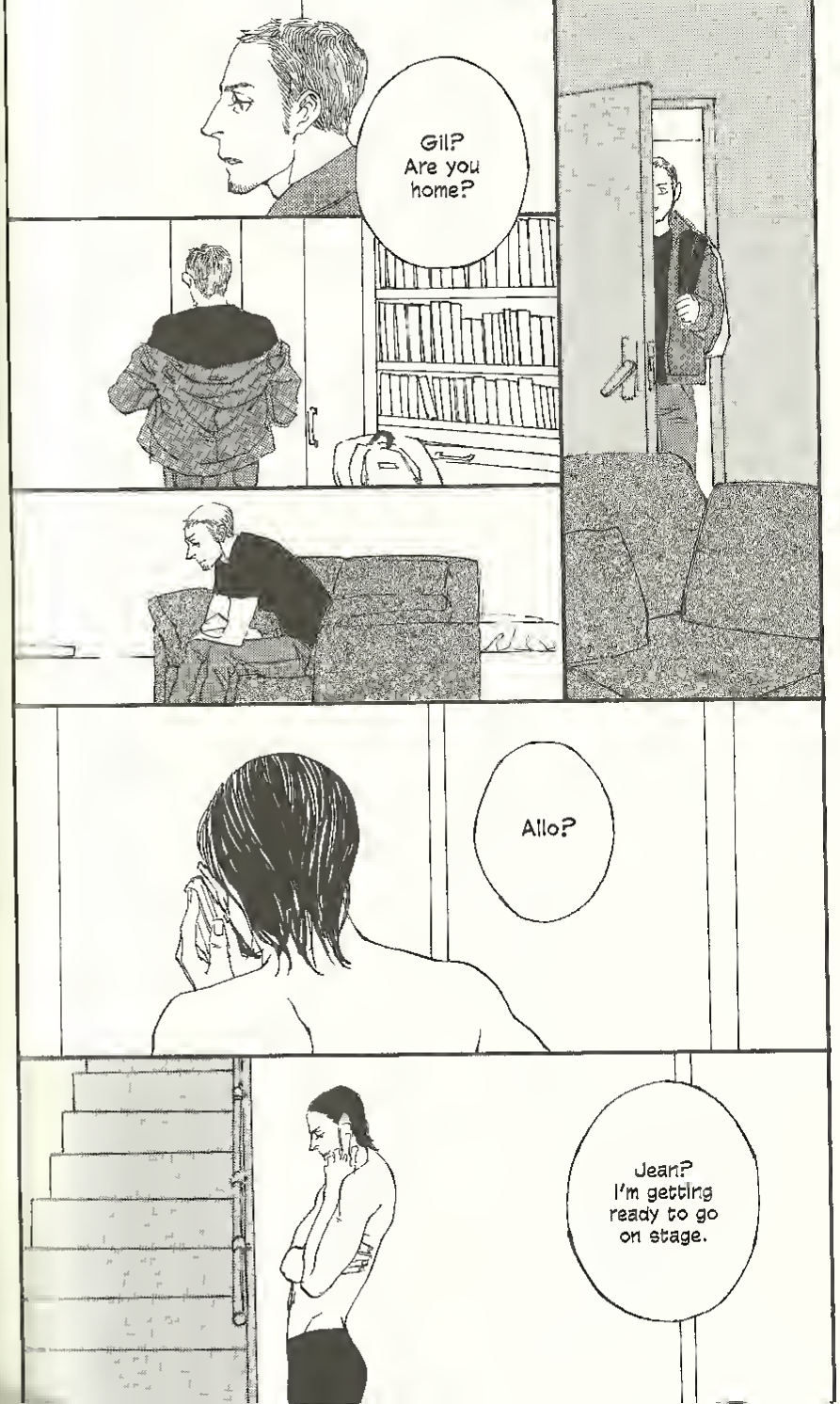
It's going well. But it's strange. He tells it as if it actually happened to him.
No, I was awake. How's the novel?
Nn...
Well, he *is* narrating a novel in the first person.
Sorry, I woke you.
...the eyes through which he sees the dancer are the real thing.
Yes, that's part of it. But...
Maybe.
And you sympathize, eh?
It's as if he's in love with him.


"Comme cela?"*
The first French that Jorge learned was...
But the next he learned was...
"Impossible."
Yet even as he repeated these phrases from morning till night, he was gradually giving shape to my vision.

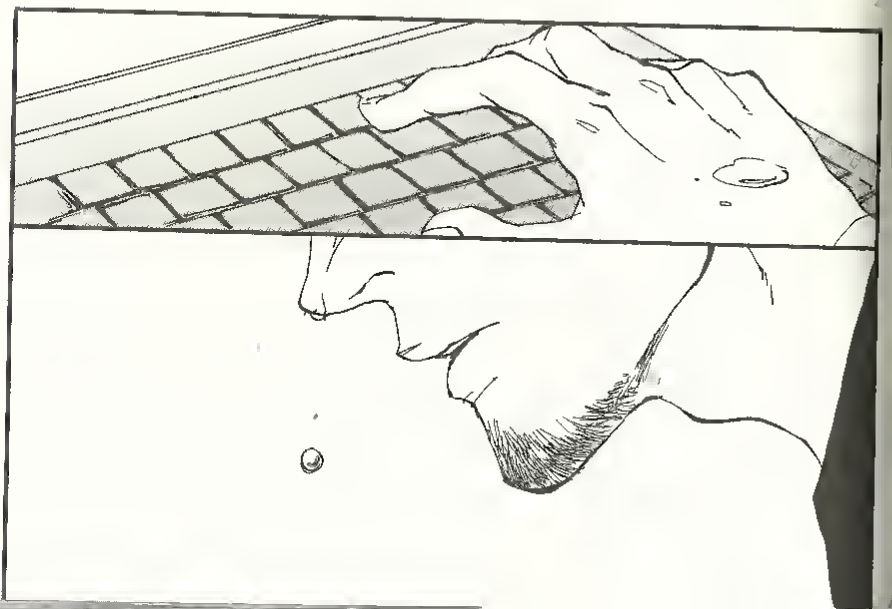

It's an old scar. It's all right to scrub it hard.
It's from back surgery. Quite a serious surgery, at that.
That's the thing that kept me from becoming a dancer.
But that was a long time ago.

I'll do it myself.
That would take too long.
I heated some water. Let's give you a bath.
Yes, like that.
Hold out your arm.
How nice. Like a dancer's body. Now your back...

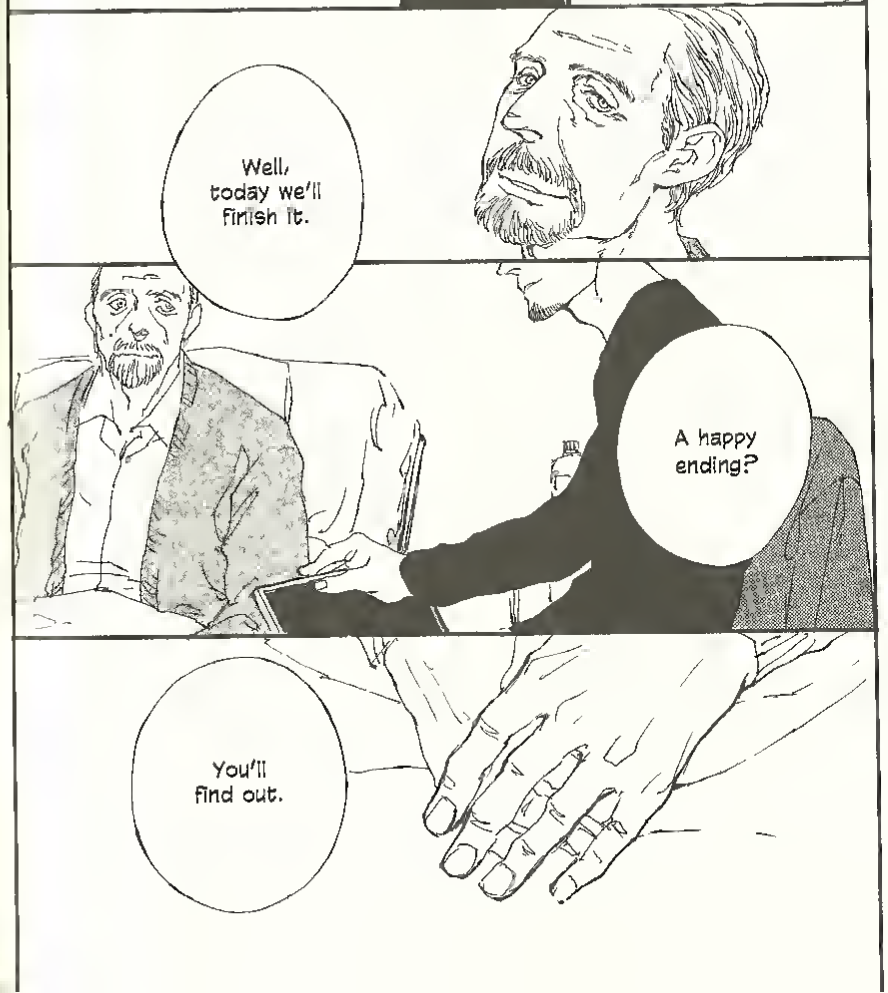
What happened?
What's wrong? Are you crying?
Nothing.
I just wanted to hear your voice.
You've become quite sentimental since you started working for that old man.
I hope it's a happy ending.
It's not finished.
You have to tell me the story some time.
I'm sure it will be.

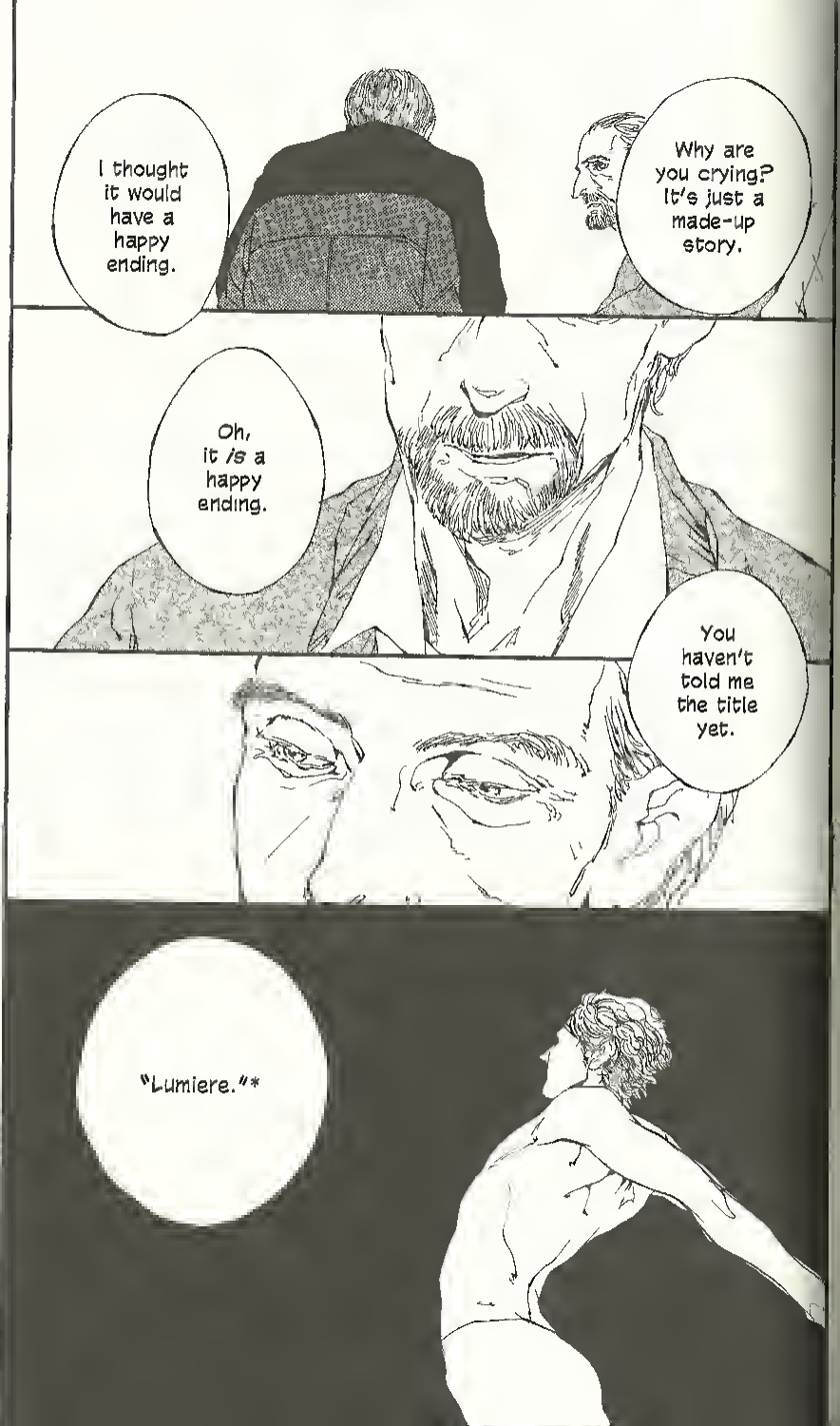

Gil? Are you home?
Allo?
Jean? I'm getting ready to go on stage.

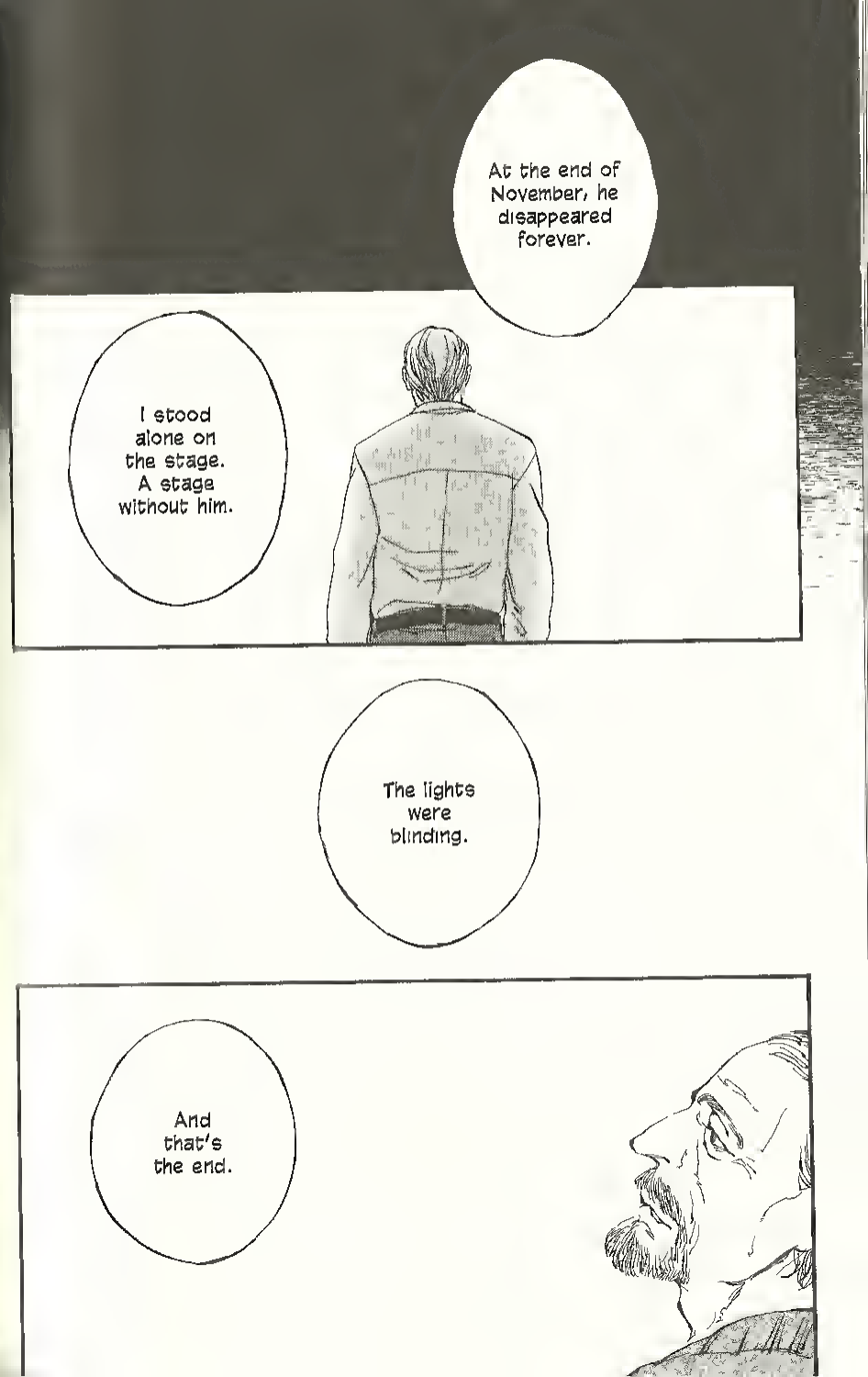
Before I forget.
I brought tickets for the ballet. I don't often go, but my lover is dancing in this one.
Where did we leave off?
Where Jorge returned after disappearing.
We can go together.



So long.
A bit more than a month.
How long have we been working on this?
So *short*.


Well, today we'll finish it.
A happy ending?
You'll find out.

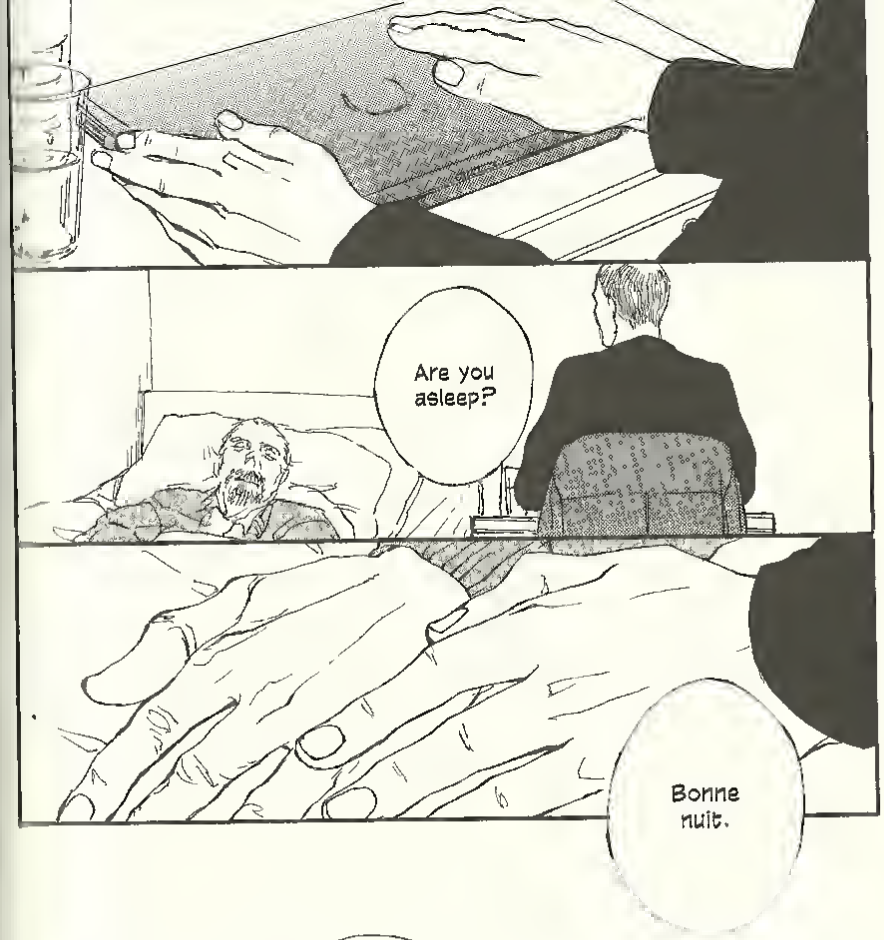

I thought it would have a happy ending.
Why are you crying? It's just a made-up story.
Oh, it *is* a happy ending.
You haven't told me the title yet.
"Lumiere."*


At the end of November, he disappeared forever.
I stood alone on the stage. A stage without him.
The lights were blinding.
And that's the end.

*Light

# Red Blinds the Foolish

## AFTERWORD




I'll leave the light on.

THE END

Thank you for picking up
***Red Blinds the Foolish.***
I certainly never imagined I'd ever be allowed to do a story about a matador and a butcher in a commercial magazine in Japan, and I'm even more thrilled to have it published in book form. As I was working on the idea for the story, I found myself inexorably drawn into the world of the corrida de toros. This was both fun and frankly a bit scary, but I like to think that I managed to infuse the story with that passion. I am grateful to those who supported me in creating this work, to my family, and to Tanaka-san, who provided me with this opportunity.

As I was working on the story, I began to feel a powerful itch that begged to be scratched...

# SO I WENT TO SEE THE BULLFIGHTS!

← My friend "C" who was dragged along.

em, who was working on a manga at the Narita airport.

## Madrid

Madrid's Las Ventas bullring, the most influential bullring and true Mecca of bullfighting.

Our trip in May coincided with the Festival of San Isidro, so there were bullfights held every day. But because of the popularity of the event, tickets were hard to come by. With some help from friends, though, I managed to get ahold of some tickets before we left for Spain.

There were plenty of stalls.

Olé!

As we watched the corrida, we got a feel for the timing of when to shout "olé!" Before you know it, you find yourself shouting without thinking (haha).

Eat

He gave us sunflower seeds.

(Spanish)

The man who sat next to us tried to be helpful.

That was...

Olé!

I love the bullfighters.

You like the bullfights?

I accidentally said torero ("matador") instead of toro ("bulls", meaning "bullfights").

Just as I would try to explain something to C, the man would explain the same thing to me. (I think.)

The crowd responds to a bad performance by hurling ruthless insults and seat cushions!

## Cordoba

Buses are really convenient for traveling long distances in Spain! Cheap and comfortable.

OHHH!!

I freaked when I saw a poster with my favorite matador...

We were cornered by a scalper while waiting in line to buy tickets.

Long line

Tickets are sold out

Maybe he should try this where it's less obvious that tickets aren't sold out.

But he gets points for brazenness!

The bullfight in Cordoba was like a festival. When the matador made consecutive passes, the crowd would call for music from the band.

Música!

I left C alone in a bar while I waited in the rain for the matadors to arrive.

Alarm clock (She didn't have a watch.)

Ox?

People had told me my favorite matador wouldn't be performing because of an injury, but this was his first day back in the ring. I'm so glad I went!

He was so close I panicked and forgot to take his picture.

I finally got to use my white handkerchief! In response to a great bullfight, the crowd waves white handkerchiefs to ask the president of the ring to present the matador with the bull's ear.

## Granada

There weren't any bullfights here, so we just stopped by.

Ohh!

A sudden shower had us worrying that the corrida would be cancelled. Luckily, it stopped in time.

Back again to **Madrid**.

We got a tour of the bullring.

We watched horseback bullfighting.

The horse's training is amazing!

We peeked into a meatpacking house.

And when I got home...

I discovered that every photo of my favorite matador was out of focus.